

Hafa Adai!

Fitch affirms 'B+' rating of CPA airport revs; outlook at 'stable' **PAGE 2**
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\$1

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6th COVID-19-related death

By JOSHUA SANTOS
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REPORTER

The CNMI recorded its sixth COVID-19-related death last Saturday—an unvaccinated CNMI resident who passed away this month.

» **CNMI case total climbs to 1,774**
» **567 recoveries since Oct. 28**

This came as the CNMI reported a total of 592 new infections that were identified across nine days and were reported on Saturday and late Thursday.

In a news statement from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., it said the latest fatality had tested positive for COVID-19 in November, was

See DEATH on Page 4

Babauta: Torres potentially in contempt

» **DPS commissioner completes testimony**

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs the House of Representatives

Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee that is looking into Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' travels and expenditure of public funds, said over the weekend that Torres is in viola-

See BABAUTA on Page 4

MHS coders win Congressional App Challenge

» **Dolphins hold on to 5-year streak**

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Marianas High School juniors Carson Lin, James Lin, Dip Roy, and Jaehoon Son are the winners of the 2021 Congressional App Challenge.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) announced Friday that the team of four received the top scores from judges among a total of 15 submissions from schools across the Northern Marianas with their app, A'ayuda.

"This year's App Challenge See MHS on Page 4

12 DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS



Marianas High School juniors Carson Lin, James Lin, Jaehoon Son, and Dip Roy are the winners of the 2021 Congressional App Challenge with their app, A'ayuda.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:30pm, Dec. 12, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population Fully Vaccinated: **91%**

Days since last community transmission **2**

| Pfizer/BioNTech | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Initiated: | 35,407 |
| Fully Vaccinated: | 32,654 |
| Moderna | |
| Initiated: | 5,243 |
| Fully Vaccinated: | 4,806 |
| Janssen | |
| Fully vaccinated: | 1,100 |

| GUAM | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|-----------|--------|----------------|--------|
| Positive | 19,300 | 8 ¹ | 19,308 |
| Recovered | 18,752 | 21 | 18,773 |
| Active | 260 | 8 | 268 |
| Deaths | 267 | 0 | 267 |

| SAIPAN | OLD | NEW | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|
| Positive | 1,182 | 592 ² | 1,774 |
| Traced via Travel Screening | 267 | 7 | 274 |
| Traced via Community Screening | 915 | 585 | 1,500 |
| Deaths | 5 | 1 | 6 |

¹12/12=1; 12/11=7

²12/11=260; 12/9=332

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinatecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

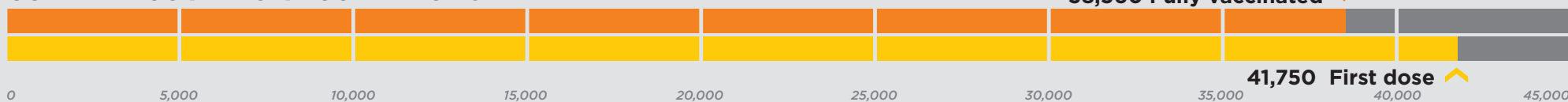
COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



INSIDE



NATION

Dozens are dead after a tornado outbreak roared across the middle of the United States.

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ASIA

New coronavirus infections in South Korea exceeded 7,000 for the third consecutive day.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

Jussie Smollett is convicted of lying to police about a racist, homophobic attack.

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Local

Fitch affirms 'B+' rating of CPA airport revs; outlook at 'stable'

NEW YORK—Fitch Ratings has affirmed the 'B+' rating on the Commonwealth Ports Authority approximately \$7.8 million of outstanding senior series 1998A airport revenue bonds. The Rating Outlook has been revised to Stable from Negative.

Rating rationale

The Outlook revision to Stable reflects improvement in the airport system's financial position, due to effective cost

containment measures and financial relief from federal aid, mitigating near-term pandemic-related stresses. Federal relief funds and the use of full passenger facility charge collections provide sufficient cash flow to cover debt service and operations over the next few years, despite continued depressed enplanement levels. While traffic improvement remains below peers, immediate financial pressures are alleviated, and the airport is better

positioned to restore metrics to historical levels.

The rating reflects a small air traffic base with risk of elevated volatility tied to the islands' limited economy. Manageable capital needs coupled with robust balance sheet liquidity in excess of debt outstanding further support the rating. Additionally, the authority maintains insurance coverage and strong cash reserves and unrestricted liquidity that more than meet

debt service requirements. In addition, Fitch recognizes the implementation of a new, improved airline use agreement in fiscal 2021, and the relatively low debt resulting in negative leverage throughout the forecast period.

Key rating drivers

Highly Volatile Enplanement Base - Revenue Risk (Volume): Weaker

The airport system is an essential enterprise, serving as the gateway to and within the Mariana Islands. The system serves a small enplanement base of approximately 568,091 passengers pre-pandemic in fiscal 2019, reflecting the overall population base and the island's more limited, weaker economy. Traffic performance is potentially vulnerable to underlying economic stresses, given the significant component of traffic tied to the tourism industry, and service offerings are limited. Due to the pandemic, enplanements decreased 48% in fiscal 2020.

Limited Pricing Power - Revenue Risk (Price): Weaker

The authority operates under rates by ordinance, and implemented a new rate methodology for air carriers operating at CPA airports, effective Oct. 1, 2021. The rate methodology is based on space usage and requires that rates be calculated annually, utilizing the next fiscal year budget. If CPA determines that airport revenues are insufficient to cover operations, the authority may increase fees and charges to an amount sufficient to meet all obligations.

This enhanced pricing power allows for greater financial flexibility under an adverse operating environment. Successful implementation of the new agreement in the coming years, demonstrating the ex-

pected stronger cost recovery, may warrant a higher price risk score for the airport.

Moderate Capital Plan - Infrastructure Development & Renewal: Midrange

The authority's capital improvement plan is modest at approximately \$35 million. Existing projects include runway rehabilitation and perimeter fence replacement. The CIP is predominantly grant funded with only a small amount coming from CPA funds. To the extent a significant portion of PFC revenue is needed for debt service, it could hamper the airports' ability to provide required matching funds, thus limiting grant receipts. However, CPA's substantial build-up of liquidity partially mitigates this risk.

Conservative Capital Structure - Debt Structure: Stronger

The authority maintains 100% fixed-rate, fully amortizing senior debt. Annual debt service payments are essentially level, and final maturity on the bonds is in 2028. Structural features are strong and in line with most of Fitch's rated airports. No additional bond issuances are anticipated in the near term.

Financial Profile

Debt service coverage ratio is estimated at 2.0x in fiscal 2020, benefitting from the receipt of federal relief funds. The authority has reserves in excess of debt outstanding, such that leverage is presently negative. The ability to treat all PFCs as revenues provides stability and has helped the airport maintain robust liquidity levels of over Fitch-calculated 600 days cash on hand in fiscal 2020. Fitch estimates cost per enplanement in fiscal 2020 to remain elevated at over \$13 in fiscal 2020.

Peer group

Small hub size airports with weaker revenue characteristics and elevated CPE profiles such as Fresno (BBB+/Negative), Burlington (BBB/Negative), and Dayton (BBB/Stable), serve as comparable peers. These airports all have traffic bases below 1 million enplanements and experienced significant passenger declines related to the pandemic. However, in contrast to CPA, the peer airports have seen passenger volumes recovering to over 60% of pre-pandemic levels. CPA demonstrates higher coverage and significantly lower leverage, though these are necessary to mitigate its more volatile operating and financial profiles. (PR)

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Kuino N. Camacho
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IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In the Matter of the)
Petition for) FCD CN
the Change) CIVIL ACTION
of Name of:) NO. 21-0301
Kuino N.)
Camacho) **NOTICE**
Petitioner) **OF HEARING**

Notice is hereby given that the above-entitled matter is set for a hearing on December 20, 2021, at 9:00am in Courtroom 217A, before Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio.

Dated this 20th day of July, 2021.

Patrick V. Diaz
Clerk of Court
/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

*Promotional period is from November 2 - December 31. Offer only valid with personal Bank of Guam Visa debit card used at participating Guam and Saipan Shell stations. Additional terms and conditions apply.

SIS students sweep VFW audio-essay, essay contest

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan International School students swept this year's Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen youth essay contest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3457.

VFW Post 3457 announced last Friday this year's VOD and Patriot's Pen youth essay contest winners, with Jesus T. Sablan, Serin Chung, and Stephanie Kim being named the VOD winners. Patriot's Pen winners are Brendan DeRocher, Jason Yu, and Moshe Sikkell.

Hopwood Middle School teacher Dr. Riya Nathrani and SIS high school teacher Kimberlee R. Church were awarded the "VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Post Recognition Award" last Friday as well. The award recognizes middle and high school teachers who promote citizenship education in their classrooms and schools.

SIS junior and two-time essay contest winner Jesus T. Sablan described the essay as a great opportunity and that participating gave him confidence in his writing.

"This award is such a great honor. ...This is my second year and I'm so humbled for the opportunity for me to learn and grow through this competition. This competition has given me so much confidence in my writing and has given me so much confidence in my future work, and I will next year compete in the VFW competition again because this is such an amazing opportu-

nity," said Sablan in an interview Friday.

Nathrani said she was grateful to have received the award and briefly explained some of her efforts in the classroom that earned her the award. "I'm very grateful, but also I'm glad that the VFW is honoring the work of teachers, and I know this award [is] to commemorate citizenship in the classroom and in our schools," said Nathrani.

In her classroom, Nathrani always encourages her students to be good people. In her computer literacy lessons, she also teaches her students digital citizenship and the importance of being respectful to others online.

"These are the lessons I hope that every person will learn and every teacher will instill in their students, because we do need [kinder] human beings in the world. So I think this is definitely a way for me to be honored in that respect, and I look forward to doing more work to help our students achieve their own dreams in their own ways," Nathrani added.

Church said she was proud of the students that participated and were recognized. Speaking briefly about her award, she said she was pleas-

See SIS on Next Page



This year's Voice of Democracy and Patriot's Pen contest winners share a photo holding up certificates of recognition during a ceremony last Friday at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3457's main location in Garapan. First and second from right is VFW Post 3457 commander Joe McDoulett and Saipan International School teacher and "VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Post Recognition Award" recipient Kimberlee R. Church.

JOSHUA SANTOS

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PACIFICPOINTS

IT&E

Public warned of rough seas, rip currents

The public is being warned that large breaking waves of 9 to 12 feet and dangerous rip currents are present in north and east facing reefs of the Marianas.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Guam and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, a high surf advisory

remains in effect until 6am today, Tuesday and there is a high rip current risk through Tuesday afternoon. A small craft advisory remains in effect until 6am Tuesday.

Man wants \$1M in compensation for twisting his ankle

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man has filed a lawsuit against the American Memorial Park in the U.S. District Court for the NMI after he twisted his ankle while out at the park with his two sons back in 2019.

Yoon Suk Chang, through his lawyer, William Fitzgerald, filed the lawsuit last Dec. 7 against the American Memorial Park for an ankle injury he sustained back in 2019 that he allegedly underwent a medical operation for.

Chang, who is also a local business owner, is asking the federal court to

award him damages in the amount of \$1 million due to financial loss as a result of the injury and operation.

According to the lawsuit, back in Dec. 8, 2019, Chang and his two sons went to the park and played in the grassy area adjacent to the amphitheater.

Chang's younger son started to go toward the parking lot away from the grassy area so the plaintiff followed him in order to stop him from going there. As he did so, he claims his foot was caught in a hole about a foot deep, causing him to fall violently to the ground, twisting his ankle.

The plaintiff allegedly stayed on the ground for about 15 minutes because he was dazed and almost passed out because of severe pain.

Following the fall, Chang said he did not go to the hospital and instead applied ice on his ankle and took an aspirin. By Dec. 10, 2019, the plaintiff said the pain was too intense and he went to Brothers Oriental Medicine Clinic, where they recommended he get an x-ray.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

DEATH

From Page 1

identified at CHCC, and was isolated. The patient was admitted to CHCC's Alternate Care Site at Kanoa Resort.

CHCC declined to provide more details when pressed for specifics on the person's exact date of death, citing patient confidentiality and privacy.

The news release confirming the COVID-19 death quotes Gov. Ralph DLG Torres as speaking about the importance of getting vaccinated. It also quotes CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña about "living COVID-19 safe." Both emphasized the importance of following the "3 W's": wash your hands, watch your distance, and wear a face covering.

"We extend our deepest condolences to the family and loved ones. This is another reminder for our people who are not vaccinated to get vaccinated. Vaccines save lives from this unforgiving disease. We must also continue to protect each other by practicing the 3 W's," said Torres.

"It will never be easy to deliver this news. We will provide necessary support to the family and will continue to provide the support our whole com-

munity needs," said Muña.

She also urged the community to continue practicing the "3 W's" and to "do other preventative measures."

"We need to start living COVID-19 safe. Act as if you actually have the infection; and even when your test results come back negative, this is still great practice while we are in this pandemic," she added.

New cases

Separately, CHCC also reported that a total of 332 new cases of COVID-19 were identified from Dec. 1 to 7, and another 260 were confirmed from Dec. 8 to 9.

CHCC also said there have been 567 recovered cases since Oct. 28, 2021. CHCC's official announcements can be found on its social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

As of Dec. 10, CHCC reports that there are 14 active hospitalizations: 10 unvaccinated, two vaccinated, two partially vaccinated, and zero on a ventilator. One individual has already been discharged from CHCC's Alternate Care Site.

Of the 332 cases announced last week, one was identified on Dec. 1, 116 on Dec. 4, 37 on Dec. 5, 72 on Dec. 6, and 106 on Dec. 7.

Of these cases, 266 were found through contact tracing, 65 through community-based testing, and one found through fifth-day travel testing. The vaccination statuses of the 332 were pending verification as of the night of Dec. 9, said CHCC.

Of the 260 cases announced on Saturday, 174 were identified on Dec. 8 and 86 on Dec. 9. Of these cases, 105 were found through contact tracing, 149 through CBT, and six through travel testing.

In a virtual news briefing on Friday, Muña briefly said that CHCC's focus right now is on preventing a further increase of hospitalizations and "making sure that everybody has the best outcome out of this."

"Our health system [is] focusing on the hospitalizations as well as making sure that everybody has the best outcome out of this. ... We did change in our reporting about those that have recovered. That's because that's what we are really looking at: trying to get individuals to have the best outcome, which is recovery and not getting hospitalized," said Muña.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

BABAUTA

From Page 1

tion of a subpoena that summoned him to appear before the committee Friday at 10:30am, which could also mean he is potentially in contempt.

Babauta issued this statement despite the committee's meeting with Torres' counsels, Ross Garber and Gilbert Birnrich, which ended Friday at 10:20am and the subsequent appearance of Department of Public Safety Commissioner Robert A. Deleon Guerrero before the committee, which took the whole day.

Babauta said Torres may already be held in contempt for failing to appear in accordance with the subpoena.

She said if Torres appears voluntarily to cooperate and testify under oath at the JGO's scheduled meeting tomorrow, Tuesday, at 10:30am, the committee will decline to pursue

contempt charges for his earlier failure to appear.

With respect to Deleon Guerrero's testimony, the DPS commissioner completed his testimony Friday without any incident, despite expectations that his testimony would be marred with shouting matches, considering that JGO Committee member Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) has been constantly criticizing the commissioner in previous hearings and on social media.

In July 2020, Deleon Guerrero figured in a heated discussion with Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) when he raised his voice several times during a budget hearing, following the lawmaker's back-to-back questions on nepotism, furloughs, and civil service rules.

At Friday's hearing, Deleon Guerrero said that Torres does not ask to meet him at the tarmac from his off-island trips and that he does it vol-

untarily, nor does Torres ask him to carry his hand carry luggage at the airport. He said it only happened once and he is unsure if his badge allows him access across the airport because he is always accompanied by airport personnel when he goes there.

When asked about non-disclosure agreement that were allegedly signed by DPS officers on or before June 22 and 23 this year, Anthony Aguon, counsel for Deleon Guerrero, said that that question has already been answered that there is no NDA.

Aguon said his client has not seen the documents and if the committee has evidence otherwise, present it to them so he will discuss it with the commissioner. "I'm willing to receive it and discuss it with my client," the lawyer said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

These conditions will create dangerous swimming and surfing conditions and localized beach erosion. Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water.

Large north and east swell were expected to peak last night, then slowly subside today into tonight. Surf along east facing reefs could fall below hazardous levels of 12 feet sometime Monday, with surf along north facing reefs possibly falling below hazardous levels of 9 feet Monday night.

East winds of 15 to 25 knots with gusts up to 30 knots and seas 8 to 11 feet will be present in Marianas coastal waters until 6am Tuesday. Conditions will be hazardous to small craft.

MHS

From Page 1

featured some of the most sophisticated apps that I have seen from students," said Sablan. "Both new and experienced coders displayed thoughtfulness in their app ideas and great dedication to coding their apps according to their vision. The skills they demonstrated speaks volumes about the determination, creativity, and initiative of young coders right here in the Marianas."

The Congressional App Challenge is an annual coding competition for middle school and high school students hosted by Members of Congress nationwide. Students can work either individually or in a team of up to four individuals to create an app for any platform, using any coding language of their choice. Students compete only with other coders in their congressional districts. This is the sixth year that Sablan has hosted an App Challenge.

The MHS team's winning app, *A'ayuda*, is a Web-based app that provides a community-driven platform for everyday people to learn and share knowledge about the Chamorro and Carolinian language.

When asked what inspired them to create *A'ayuda*, the students said, "We remember that as middle school students, making a sentence in Chamorro was really difficult, because the only resources that non-speakers got were a couple dictionaries that we could only use in the classroom and sometimes, we had to look up some words online, and most of them were inaccurate or misleading."

SIS

From Page 3

antly surprised to have gotten it and that the award and the contests bring recognition to the importance of civil behavior.

"I am so proud of our students. Every year we participate, and every year we have kids that are recognized, but this year was special in that so many of our kids were recognized, and there was such a diverse group of them," she said.

According to the VFW website, the Voice of Democracy audio-essay program provides high school students across the nation "the unique opportunity to express themselves in regards to a democratic and patriotic-

Strongest winds and highest seas are expected over Tinian and Saipan waters, marginally less for Guam and Rota waters. Seas and wind will lessen Tuesday, possibly falling below hazardous levels.

Inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, to avoid navigating in hazardous conditions.

Inexperienced swimmers should remain out of the water due to dangerous surf conditions. The public is being advised to stay out of the water along north and east facing shores. Elsewhere, swim near a lifeguard. If caught in a rip current, swim in a direction following the shoreline until you are out of the current, then head in to shore. (PR)

ing. "Now that we have matured, we think this will be a big problem for the students, because classes and local libraries are already experiencing shortages of these dictionaries, there are very few teachers in the school system teaching the language, and sometimes students are fed with misinformation online. Instead, we could use a dedicated space, driven by the community, to help the next cycle of students to learn about the language."

All four members of the winning team will receive national recognition by having their app on display in the U.S. Capitol for a period of one year. Students will also receive invitations to the annual House of Code reception, where young coders will have the opportunity to showcase their apps to Members of Congress and other coders from across the nation.

This year's second and third place teams comprise young coders from Mount Carmel School. Seniors Aleia Santos and Richard Villagomez received second place with their app, *Irensia*, a mobile app that presents users with multiple features essential to helping them learn about the Chamorro language, culture, and people. Hyunky Park and Hyunjun Kim came in third place with their app, *My Mood Calendar*, a mobile app wherein users can practice self-care by recording the moods and feelings that they had throughout the day.

Sablan received a total of 15 app submissions from three different schools—Marianas High School, Mount Carmel School, and Saipan Community School. A total of 35 students participated in this year's Challenge, ranging from 8th to 12th grade. (PR)

themed recorded essay." VFW said that nearly 65,000 high schoolers in the U.S. submit their essays every year in hopes of earning their share of over \$2 million in scholarship funds and other incentives awarded through the program. This year's VOD theme was, "America: Where Do We Go From Here?"

The Patriot's Pen youth essay contest is another contest hosted by VFW posts for sixth to eighth-grade students nationwide. VFW said that every year, around 165,000 middle schoolers submit their essays in hopes of earning their share of more than \$1.4 million in state and national awards. This year's theme that entrants had to write a 400-500 word essay on the topic: "How Can I Be a Good American?"

CPA seeks federal subsidy for interisland air service

By **KIMBERLY B. ESMORES**
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Following the recent suspension of flights by the CNMI's only interisland air travel service due to a fee assessment dispute, the Commonwealth Ports Authority has reached out to the U.S. Department of Transportation requesting it extend the eligibility for its Essential Air Service program

to the CNMI in order to subsidize interisland air service.

In a letter addressed to Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, CPA chair Kimberly King-Hinds explained the CNMI's interisland flight situation, citing the recent dispute with the CNMI's sole commuter, Star Marianas Airlines Inc., which resulted in suspension of air-service.

"I am writing because the

CNMI needs your help. Our community has struggled with obtaining affordable and reliable means of air travel between our most populated islands. With the suspension of air service from our only interisland passenger air carrier, the people of the Commonwealth face a struggle unlike most within the United States: our people cannot easily travel—even within our territory. This is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed immediately, especially in light of our current on-the-ground situation," King-Hinds said.

The CPA chair said the only long-term solution to the problem is make federal subsidy available through various programs offered by the U.S. Department of Transportation, including the Essential Air Service Program, the Alternative Essential Air Service Program, and the Small Community Air Service Development Program. "Any resources you could provide to help our communities participate in these programs is deeply appreciated," she said.

King-Hinds said the hope is that by being designated as an EAS-eligible community, the CNMI will be able to establish affordable and reliable interisland air travel through subsidi-

dizing commuter and certificated air carriers to serve the Rota and Tinian airports.

"I am asking that the entire CNMI, which includes Rota and Tinian, be designated as a small community eligible to receive EAS funding. Specifically, I ask that the department subsidize either multiple roundtrips a day with 30- to 50-seat aircraft or additional frequencies with aircraft with nine seats or fewer to connect the Rota and Tinian airports to the Saipan International Airport. The Rota



King-Hinds

and Tinian airports are both public primary commercial service non-hub airports, and the Saipan International Airport is a public primary commercial service small-hub airport. To my knowledge, the CNMI has never been designated as an eligible EAS community, and therefore, it has had an average subsidy per passenger of less than \$1,000 during the most recent fiscal year," she said.

King-Hinds, who is the recently appointed Association of Pacific Ports president, said that extending EAS-eligibility to the CNMI is of critical importance be-

cause it is in desperate need of federal funds to establish scheduled air service for its communities that currently have none.

"Without air service, the health, safety, and well-being of our people and the struggling economies of these communities are significantly threatened. This is apparent based on the simple fact that without air service, individuals living on Tinian and Rota will not have access to adequate medical

care. There are no hospitals on Tinian and Rota. Residents there have to travel to Saipan to give birth, get hemodialysis, chemotherapy, and any other type of critical health care that is not available on Tinian and Rota. Elective health maintenance and care services like seeing an optometrist, dentist, or to simply get a mammogram are also not available on Tinian and Rota. Some of these critical services are also difficult to get on the island of Saipan, meaning many of our CNMI residents have to travel to Guam or the mainland to receive urgent critical

care like chemotherapy and radiation," she said.

"But the impact is not limited to just access to health care. The impact is very real to law enforcement [on] Rota and Tinian. Tinian and Rota do not have jails. Arrestees have to be transported to Saipan to be given their procedural due process. Arrestees currently are being released back into the community because of transportation issues. This poses a great danger to those communities, especially for victims of domestic abuse," King-Hinds added.

King-Hinds noted that the CNMI has one of the highest rates of poverty and, without federal assistance, the fees dispute will only recur. Even if the current sole air carrier were to resume services, she said the CNMI risks future air services being suspended or disrupted should another dispute arise.

"The CNMI has one of the highest rates of poverty throughout the entire nation. Cost of travel between the islands are cost prohibitive with the current carrier. I fear that without federal assistance, these issues will recur regardless of who the carrier is," she said.

USEDA awards Marianas \$1.44M grant to revive tourism industry

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The U.S. Economic Development Administration awarded the CNMI Wednesday \$1.44 million in State Tourism Grant to revive its tourism economy, according to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP).

Sablan said in his e-kilili newsletter over the weekend the \$1,440,640 grant comes from the American Rescue Plan Act that the U.S. Congress passed last March.

He said EDA divvied up the funding among the U.S. ter-

ritories based on population. The CNMI can use the federal money for marketing and to develop the infrastructure and workforce to enhance safe leisure and business travel.



Sablan

Sablan said this week's State Tourism Grant is non-competitive, but EDA is also now accepting applications for competitive tourism grants on a rolling basis from local governments, non-profit organizations, institutions of higher education, and other eligible entities.

He said application can be filed no later than Jan. 31, 2022.



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*Conditions may apply. See store for details.



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp | Website: <http://www.nmhc.gov.net>

AMENDMENT NO. 1 PUBLIC NOTICE

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION (NMHC) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT – DISASTER RECOVERY (CDBG-DR) FEDERAL CROSS-CUTTING REQUIREMENT PRESENTATION ON SECTION 3, DAVIS BACON AND RELATED ACTS (DBRA), ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS, FAIR LABOR, FAIR HOUSING & NON-DISCRIMINATION, AND WOMEN AND MINORITY OWNED BUSINESS ENTERPRISES..

12/02/2021

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is conducting a Federal Cross-Cutting presentation for all interested contractors planning to conduct business with the NMHC. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) encourages all HUD funded programs to comply with these requirements.

Section 3 is a provision of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. The purpose of Section 3 is to ensure employment and other economic opportunities generated by certain HUD financial assistance shall, to the greatest extent feasible, and consistent with existing Federal, State and local laws and regulations, be directed to low-and very low-income persons, particularly those who are recipients of government assistance for housing, and to business concerns which provide economic opportunities to low-and very low-income person.

Davis Bacon and Related Acts: require the payment of prevailing wages to laborers and mechanics employed on the site of the work of certain federal or federally assisted contracts for construction, alteration, or repair.

An Environmental Review is the process of reviewing a project and its potential environmental impacts to determine whether it meets federal, state, and local environmental standards. The environmental review process is required for all HUD-assisted projects to ensure that the proposed project does not negatively impact the surrounding environment and that the property site itself will not have an adverse environmental or health effect on end users

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a federal law which establishes minimum wage, overtime pay eligibility, recordkeeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in federal, state, and local governments.

The Fair Housing Act (FHA) is a federal statute that prohibits discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, as well as in residential real-estate related transactions such as advertising, mortgage lending, homeowner's insurance and zoning.

As a recipient of HUD financial assistance, NMHC CDBG-DR is required as the non-Federal entity to take necessary steps to ensure that all Subrecipients, Contractors, subcontractors, and/or developers funded in whole or in part with CDBG-DR financial assistance ensure that, when possible, contracts and other economic opportunities are directed to small and minority firms, women-owned business enterprises (WBEs), and labor surplus area firms.

The Federal Cross-Cutting Requirement presentation is postponed till December 29, 2021, 10:00 a.m. via Zoom Teleconferencing. You may access the Zoom Teleconference link at www.nmhc.gov.net Public Notice/Announcement tab or www.cnmi-cdbgr.com.

If you may have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager/Procurement Officer at (670)234-6866/9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhc.gov.net.

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

Tinian Field Office
Tel: (670)433-9213
Fax: (670)433-3690

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

Rota Field Office
Tel: (670)532-9410
Fax: (670)532-9441



Former NMI chief justice Jose S. Dela Cruz, eighth from right, donates \$1,000 to the Friends of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library on Dec. 2, 2021.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dela Cruz donates \$1K to JKPL

Former NMI chief justice Jose S. Dela Cruz donated \$1,000 to the Friends of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library last Dec. 2, 2021, with the money being a portion of the sale of Dela Cruz's new book.

Dela Cruz accompanied by his daughter, Roxanne Dela Cruz, presented a check for \$1,000 to the Friends of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library as part of the celebration of JKPL's 30th anniversary this year.

Dela Cruz, who launched his latest book, *The Fundamental Issues Affecting the Northern Mariana Islands*, at the library last Nov. 20, 2021, donated 50% of the proceeds from his book.

The new book documents historical accounts

of the CNMI and serves as a sequel to Dela Cruz's book, *From Colonization to Self-Government: the Northern Marianas Experience*. Both books are available for check out and curbside pick-up at the JKPL by visiting www.cnmilib.org.

Contact Roxanne Dela Cruz at (670) 788-1957 or email nmifundamentalissues@gmail.com to purchase either book for \$20 each.

"Un dangkulo na si yu'us ma'ase. We humbly thank you, Honorable Jose S. Dela Cruz and family, for your continued patronage and support of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. Your donation will assist the JKPL's programs and services for the CNMI," said library director Erlinda C. Naputi. **(PR)**



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

4.9-magnitude quake in Pagan region

At 10:53am on Dec. 11 2021, a report of a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred at 18.709°N 145.800°E in the Pagan region of the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 670-237-8000. **(PR)**

4.5-magnitude quake in Pagan region

At 3:05am on Dec. 10 2021, a 4.5-magnitude earthquake occurred 18.523°N 145.672°E of the Pagan region in the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670)-237-8000. **(PR)**



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-001

KOBLERVILLE SEWERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Koblerville Sewerline Extension Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of gravity sewer main, new service laterals, connection to existing service laterals, and the installation of sewer manholes.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-IFB-22-001, Koblerville Sewer Line Extension Project"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 11, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Performance Bond of *one hundred percent (100%)* of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC. A Payment Bond of *one hundred percent (100%)* of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract may be contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) approval. If CPUC approval is required, the contract will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 30, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC's Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer for Water/Wastewater via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Joel Puyat, Engineer via email at joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior, Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality

Division of Coastal Resources Management

P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 664-8300; Fax: (670) 664-8315

www.dcrm.gov.mp



Eli D. Cabrera
Administrator
Richard V. Salas
Director, DCRM

RESCHEDULED CRM PUBLIC HEARING

KOBLERVILLE HOMESTEAD SUBDIVISION PERMIT APPLICATION NO. SMS-2001-X-213-A1

The Division of Coastal Resources Management (DCRM) is RESCHEDULING the public hearing for the proposed additional lots of the Koblerville Homestead Subdivision project on Saipan.

The Department of Public Lands is proposing to increase the Koblerville Homestead Subdivision to 330 residential lots by decreasing the homestead lot size. The project includes installation of water, power, and sewer line connections, stormwater ponding basin, access roads, and sidewalks. The project site is situated on public land identified as Lot No. 048 I 01, measuring approximately 62 acres.

The public hearing for this project is rescheduled for Thursday, January 6, 2022, at **5:00PM**, at the **BECQ 2nd Floor Main Conference Room, Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road, Lower Gualo Rai, Saipan.**

Due to the ongoing threat of COVID-19 and to ensure the health and safety of all, virtual public participation is highly encouraged via video conferencing through **Zoom link: <https://zoom.us/j/6706648315>**. Our Zoom meeting access code may change, please call the DCRM Permitting Office at (670) 664-8300 for connection assistance at least one-day prior to the public hearing date.

If you are unable to attend, written comments can be submitted to the DCRM Office, Suite 305, Gualo Rai Center, Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan, or mailed to the Division of Coastal Resources Management, P.O. Box 501304, or sent by fax at 664-8315, or by email at sablan@dcrm.gov.mp. The project files are open for review and comments during regular business hours from 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M., Monday through Friday. All written and oral comments received by DCRM will be included as part of the permit application records and will be considered in any decisions concerning the proposed projects. Please contact the DCRM at 664-8300/1 if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the Koblerville Homestead Subdivision project.

/s/ Richard V. Salas
Director
Division of Coastal Resources Management

3 fire stations to host COVID-19 antigen testing

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., in partnership with the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, will be conducting free COVID-19 antigen drive-thru testing for community members on Saipan starting Monday, Dec. 13, 2021.

Testing will be conducted via drive-thru only, and walk-ups will not be accepted. Testing timeframe is subject to the availability of testing supplies.

The DFEMS community-based testing initiative is strictly for surveillance purposes. No registration is needed. All ages can be tested.

For DFEMS antigen drive-thru testing, bring a physical identification documentation (ID) with the participant's full name and date of birth. A phone number may be requested for contact tracing purposes.

Below are the COVID-19 antigen drive-thru testing dates on Saipan:

■ **Kagman Fire Station:**

Monday, Wednesday, Saturday, 8am – 4pm

■ **Garapan Fire Station:** Monday, Wednesday, Saturday, 8am – 4pm

■ **Susupe Fire Station:** Monday, Wednesday, Saturday, 8am – 4pm

COVID-19 antigen test results will be available within 15-30 minutes, and results from the DFEMS community-based testing does not come with official test result documentation, as this community-based testing is focused on COVID-19 surveillance purposes. Thus, the surveillance testing is not recommended for travel (for travel testing information, visit <https://chcc.gov.mp/covid19testing.php>).

However, if an individual tests positive for COVID-19, they will be contacted by the CHCC's Communicable Disease Investigation/Inspection Team for next steps to begin isolation and what to do afterward.

It is recommended that indi-

viduals who were exposed to a person who tested positive for COVID-19, or if an individual is considered having a high-risk exposure, wait five to seven days before taking the antigen test. The antigen tests perform best in people experiencing symptoms within a certain number of days since symptom onset.

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC remind the public that getting tested for COVID-19 does not improve response to the illness, nor does it reduce the risk of contracting or transmitting the

disease. People who are tested and have a negative result are still vulnerable to the virus. The community is encouraged to continue practicing the 3 W's after getting tested: wear your mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance.

If an individual is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms like coughing, fever, shortness of breath, or new loss of taste or smell, it is recommended they get checked by a health care provider right away, or call the CHCC Tele-Triage line (670) 233-2067 if they do not have a provider.

If an individual is not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and it has been five to seven days since their exposure to a person who may have COVID-19, avail of the free DFEMS antigen testing or the free community-based testing (register at <https://covidtesting.chcc.health>. More dates will be announced.).

While you wait to get tested or get your test results, wear a mask, wash your hands, watch your distance, stay at home as much as possible, limit your contact with others, clean or disinfect surfaces frequently,

monitor your symptoms, and cover coughs/sneezes.

In addition, CHCC highly encourages unvaccinated individuals to get vaccinated or get a booster shot against COVID-19 to help prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Data from small clinical trials show that vaccine effectiveness against COVID-19 infection is waning after the primary series, but protection remains high against severe disease and hospitalization. Register for an initial series or booster shot at www.vaccinatecnmi.com. **(PR)**


Emergency water service interruption

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that there is an emergency water service interruption in effect due to the low water tank level at the Isley Water Tank. Customers in the areas of As Perdido, As Gonno, Koblerville, San Antonio, Afetnas, Chalan Piao, Chalan Kanoa, and Susupe will experience low pressure.

CUC operators identified the Maui 1 Shaft well offline yesterday at 2:45pm. due to a pump and motor failure. The pump and motor in the Maui 1 Shaft well is located 110-feet below

the surface, which requires operators to descend into the shaft to perform the pump and motor replacement. This work is anticipated to be completed today, Dec. 13, 2021, at 7:30pm. Customers in the affected areas will experience improved water pressure within the next six to eight hours after the tank level increases and the distribution system's pressure stabilizes.

CUC urges customers in these areas to continue to practice water conservation and to contact the CUC Customer Call Center to report leaks for repairs. **(PR)**



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
Tel: (670) 664-2371 | Fax: (670) 664-2408 | Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP22-GOV-4220026

MONITORING SERVICES FOR THE POST CLOSURE
OF THE PUERTO RICO DUMPSITE IN GARAPAN, SAIPAN

SUBMISSION DATE: 9:30 AM JANUARY 06, 2022

Governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) are soliciting sealed proposals from qualified contractors to provide Labor, Material and Equipment for the MONITORING SERVICES of the Post Closure Maintenance of the Puerto Rico Dumpsite (Now called Governor Eloy S. Inos Peace Park) in Puerto Rico, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). This project will be funded by the 702 Covenant funding under the U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

The project package will be available in digital format only on **December 06, 2021** at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, during regular working hours.

A mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference will be held at the Capital Improvement Program Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building in Capitol Hill, Saipan, at **10:00 AM ChST December 21, 2021**. Proposers may request to participate via phone call or virtually five (5) days prior to the meeting scheduled. All attendees are required to use a face mask and exercise social distancing throughout the duration of the meeting.

Questions regarding this RFP may be submitted via email to Ms. Jessel Mesa at jm.mesa@dof.gov.mp no later than **4:30 PM ChST, December 27th, 2021**. All Questions & Answers will be shared with all prospective Proposers.


Proposers located outside of the CNMI must fill out and submit the Notice of Intent to Propose Form to the Director of Procurement Services no later than **9:30AM January 17th, 2022**.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS, AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSALS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/s/ **Ralph DLG. Torres**
Governor, CNMI

/s/ **Francisco C. Aguon, Acting Director**
CNMI Procurement & Supply



NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
Procurement & Property Management Office
P.O. Box 501250 • Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Phone: (670) 234-5498 Ext. 6824 • email: ppmo@marinas.edu

LAPTOP COMPUTER AND ACCESSORIES

INVITATION FOR BIDS
NMC IFB 22-0002

Northern Marianas College is soliciting competitive sealed bids for the procurement and delivery of Information Technology Equipment for NMC CREES offices on Saipan, Rota and Tinian.

The bid specifications and Scope of Work packet may be picked up at the **NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. P, commencing WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021 between the hours of 9:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.**

Electronic packet, Anita Camacho email: anita.camacho@marinas.edu

Bid submission
Procurement & Property Management Office, Bldg. P, as Terlaje Campus Saipan

Due Date and Time: 10:00am, December 13, 2021, ChST

Paid for by 100% Federal Funds through USDA-NIFA authorized under the Hatch Act, as amended August 11, 1955, Award No. NI20HFPXXXXG059-002 (Regular)/Smith Lever Act section 3b & 3c, Award No. NI17SLBXXXXG020-004.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. The College reserves the right to reject any and/or all bid offers for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College.

/s/ Anita Camacho
Procurement & Property Manager



NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION (NMHC)
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

| NMHC JVA NO. | Positions: | Salary: | Opening Date | Closing Date |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 2021-042 | CDBG-DR Receptionist (1-Position) | UNGRADED \$20,000.00 to \$25,000.00 per annum | November 30, 2021 | December 15, 2021 4:00 PM |

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhc.gov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.


Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; the CDBG-DR Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Ladera Building, Chalan Laulau, Beach Road; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhc.gov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre-employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhc.gov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director



GUAM & COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

WEBEX MEETING DECEMBER 14, 2021

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
Honolulu Regional Office - Public Contact Team

Will host a Virtual Benefits Workshop for Veterans, Family Members, Surviving Spouses, and Community Providers

on
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2021

From
4PM-6PM (GUAM & CNMI LOCAL TIME)

To participate please join us in Cisco Webex by clicking or copying and pasting the below links into your browser:

****DOWNLOAD SLIDES at: <https://www.benefits.va.gov/honolulu/>**

<https://veteransaffairs.webex.com/veteransaffairs/j.php?MTID=mf87c13eb0cfe6c8e86e60b3ef43686bc>

You can join via Computer, Phone Audio (1-404-397-1595, 27622941020#), or Webex Mobile App. Meeting Password: X6aSpURa*33



Benefits Workshop Topics:
Compensation, Pension, Education & Training, DIC, Survivor Benefits, Loan Guaranty, Veteran Readiness & Employment, Burial and Plot Internment Allowance, Burial Flags, & Insurance

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

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AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Peddlers of fake news can wreak havoc in the real world

Normally, the St. Louis-based website The Gateway Pundit can and should be laughed off as right-wing, fake-news nonsense. But as Reuters recently reported, the site's false allegations of election fraud in jurisdictions around the country have stoked harassment and death threats against two dozen election officials. The reason toxic platforms like this exist is because there is a market for them. Only when the news-consuming public learns to be more discerning in where it looks for information will those platforms loosen their damaging grip on political discourse.

The Gateway Pundit is a popular blog among America's far-right political fringes, trafficking in the kind of half-truths and whole-cloth lies that fuel so much of that end of the political spectrum these days. After a right-wing fanatic killed a counterprotester with a car during the white nationalist demonstration in 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, The Gateway Pundit falsely attributed the attack to an "Anti-Trump protester." After the Las Vegas mass shooting that year, it wrongly accused "a Democrat who liked Rachel Maddow."

The site was a prominent purveyor of the racist lie that former President Barack Obama wasn't born in the United States. And, more recently, it advanced the Trumpian big lie that the 2020 presidential election was rife with fraud.

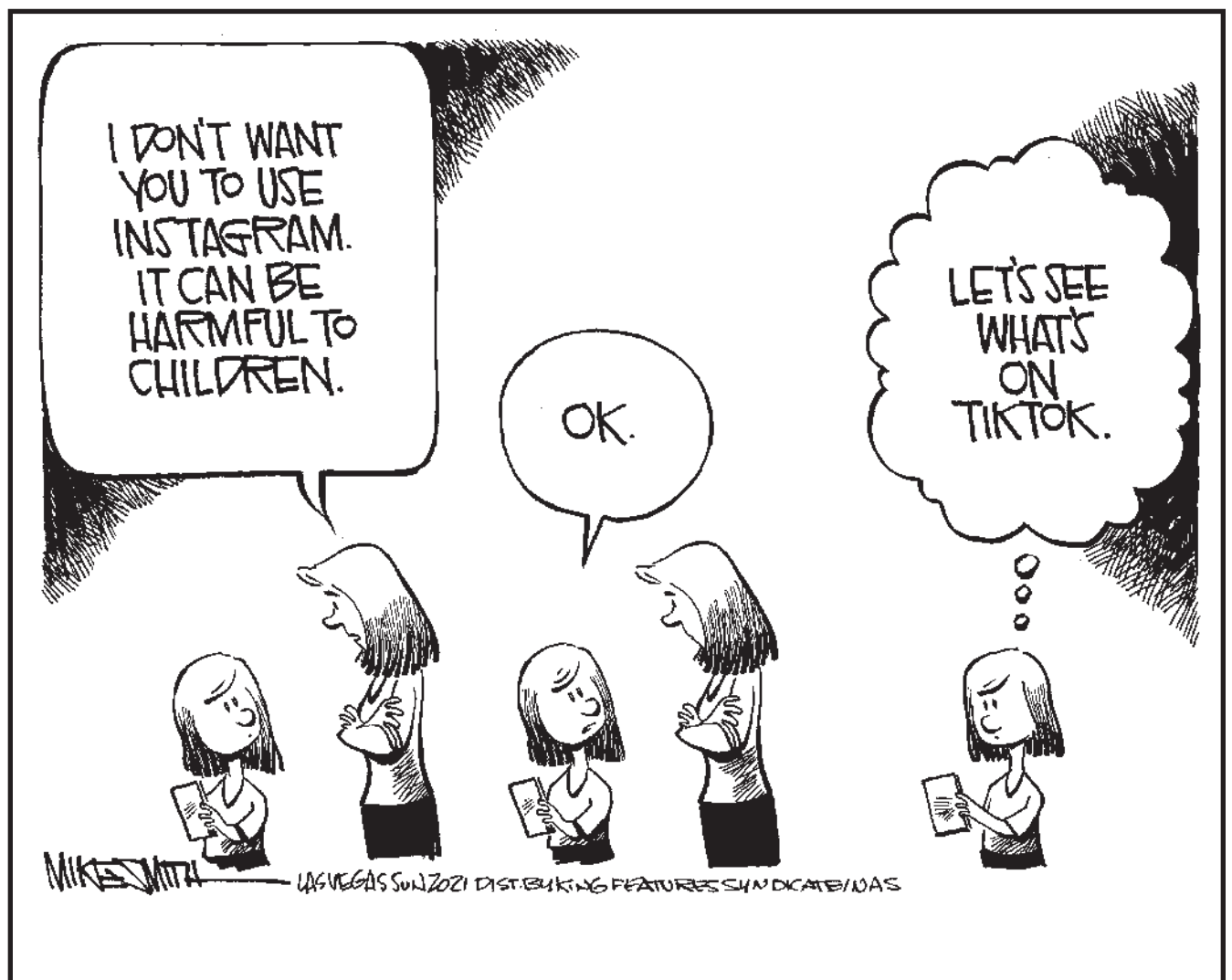
A mother and daughter who together counted ballots in Fulton County, Georgia, sued the website and its founder, St. Louisan Jim Hoft, after the site promoted false allegations by Trump surrogates that the pair counted "suitcases" full of fake Biden ballots after hours. That August post drew a comment on Hoft's site alleging the two women "are traitors to the country and should be hung by the neck until dead."

The site also promoted the falsehood about "fake" ballots in Madison, Wisconsin, which led one commenter to specify the kind of bullet recommended for killing the city clerk there. Other public officials in Wisconsin, Georgia and Arizona were inundated with racist or misogynistic hate email, allegations of "treason" and calls for their imprisonment after The Gateway Pundit lobbed baseless allegations of fraud at them.

Mainstream media outlets today are routinely accused by both the right and left of ideologically tilting their reporting, and it's not difficult to find anecdotal evidence to back up such criticism. But those mainstream sources, including this newspaper, at least attempt to present factual coverage, because their business models rely on long-term credibility. The Gateway Pundits of the world and fellow travelers, like One America News Network and Breitbart News, rely instead on shock, outrage and an appeal to consumers' worst instincts. Facts seldom come into it.

It's easy to research assertions made on these platforms. Often, they've already been debunked by reputable sources such as FactCheck.org and PolitiFact. Such double-checking by consumers shouldn't be necessary, but in a media universe polluted by such fake-news waste dumps as The Gateway Pundit, it is.

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Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk...and Paul McCartney

The Beatles: Get Back" documentary, which is my pick for best movie of the year, showcases an underappreciated aspect of Paul McCartney: He's more than just an artistic genius—he's one of the greatest managerial talents of the last century.

In a recent interview, Ringo Starr put it well: "If Paul hadn't been in the band, we'd probably have made two albums, because we were lazy boogers. But Paul's a workaholic. John and I would be sitting in the garden taking in the color green from the tree, and the phone would ring, and we would know, 'Hey lads, you want to come in? Let's go in the studio!'"

"Get Back" presents a reality-TV show version of this process in action. Almost everything that gets done goes through Paul. He is energetically testing and trying to improve musical ideas, whether his own or those of the group. He always seems focused. In one scene, while experimenting on the bass guitar for a few minutes, he seems to conjure up the song "Get Back" from virtually nothing.

He has what Silicon Valley venture capitalists call "founder energy." Chris Dixon, a partner at the VC firm Andreessen Horowitz and a professional judge of (non-musical) talent, tweeted how much respect he gained for McCartney by watching the documentary. The Beatles were one of the greatest startups of their generation: In addition to making music, they revolutionized social mores on a wide range of issues, including sex, drugs, fashion and politics.

As for work ethic, Paul has been writing and performing songs since 1956 with no real breaks. The sessions for the "Let It Be" concert and album, as portrayed in "Get Back," started only a few weeks after the work on the so-called White Album was concluded. And after "Let It Be" was to come "Abbey Road," the Beatles album where Paul most clearly takes the lead.

After the Beatles broke up, McCartney kept going. Many fans and critics prefer his work with the Beatles, but the totality of his achievements is jaw-dropping. He has three solo albums on which he plays every instrument, and he has composed in virtually every musical genre, including heavy metal, blues, music hall, country and western, gospel, Latin, pastiche, psychedelia, electronica, new wave, drone, lounge, reggae and more. Working with producer George Martin, he was one of the first popular musicians to master the use of the recording studio, in spite of having no technical background. He also learned how to

By TYLER COWEN

Bloomberg Opinion

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is a professor of economics at George Mason University and writes for the blog Marginal Revolution. His books include Big Business: A Love Letter to an American Anti-Hero.



compose for classical orchestra and wrote several major choral works, including the well-received "Ecce Cor Meum."

His vocal range once spanned four octaves and he is considered one of the greatest bass players of all time. The list of those he has collaborated with includes not only John Lennon and George Harrison, but also Ravi Shankar, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Elvis Costello, Carl Perkins, the Everly Brothers, Kiri Te Kanawa, David Gilmour, Kanye West and Rihanna. He studied the avant-garde and helped incorporate the ideas of John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen into popular music.

He grew up in a very poor area of Liverpool (you still can visit the house) and became music's first billionaire, through royalties from songwriting, revenue from concerts and shrewd investments in royalty rights to others' songs (he also inherited money from his late wife). Well into his 70s, he was still putting on 2 1/2-hour live shows, a practice stopped only by the pandemic.

He has been an active painter, published two children's books, and this year oversaw the production of the gorgeous two-volume set "The Lyrics," a memoir of sorts told through his songs. He was also, by all accounts, a very active father, helping to raise five children.

McCartney was not a perfect manager. At times he pushed Harrison too hard, and that led to Harrison threatening to leave the Beatles, as shown in "Get Back," which resulted in a more general group dissatisfaction. In his solo career he has sometimes released sub-par material and been too tolerant of less talented subordinates.

Still, the point stands: The ranks of great founders and managers rightly includes people such as Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Bill Gates. But that list is longer and more diverse than is commonly believed—and Paul McCartney stands pretty close to the top of it.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Joe Biden's incredible shrinking presidency

Joe Biden was never exactly a colossus bestriding the Earth, but he's been getting smaller by the day.

A Washington Post poll over the weekend suggested that his presidency is, for now, a smoking political crater. It had him at a 41% approval rating, despite the passage of his long-sought infrastructure bill that was supposed to buoy him and his party.

Even more striking, the survey found that Republicans lead Democrats on the generic congressional ballot by 10 points, 51% to 41%, an unprecedentedly strong showing for the GOP that forecasts an earthquake, tsunami, and maybe a few more natural disasters for Democrats come next fall.

And who can be surprised? Biden is stumbling, out of touch, and weak. Two of his major initiatives, at the border and in Afghanistan, created completely avoidable catastrophes. He has given no sense of being in control of events or even his own party. He is an accidental president who is running smack into his own inadequacies and absurd pretensions.

No one in Washington over the last four decades ever said that Joe Biden was just the man with the foresight, wisdom and deft political touch to lead the free world.

No, he was an average senatorial bloviator whose first two presidential campaigns flamed out in embarrassing fashion, before he hit the jackpot when Barack Obama chose him as his running mate in 2008.

Showing the advantage of hanging around for a very long time, Biden won both the 2020 Democratic nomination and the

presidency by default. In the primaries, the former vice president looked good in comparison to Bernie Sanders, and he ran in the general on not being Donald Trump.

Now, Biden is allied with Bernie Sanders, who helped write the first version of his Build Back Better plan, and Donald Trump no longer looms as large as Biden's foil.

The best case for Biden's presidency was that he could be a kind of consensus caretaker—restoring a sense of normality and maintaining a low profile while riding in the slipstream of improving economic conditions and a diminishing pandemic.

Instead, he's been carried along by the left-wing tide of his party and repeatedly engaged in unconstitutional executive overreach. On top of it all, he's brought his own brand of incompetence, exemplified by the botched pull-out from Afghanistan.

His foremost mistake was overestimating an attenuated electoral mandate for pedestrian governance as a permission slip for passing nearly the entirety of the progressive agenda in the space of less than a year.

Not only has there been sticker shock over the price tag of the Biden agenda, but it has little connection to things people truly care about. The infrastructure bill polls well, but no one goes about their daily lives worried about the alleged crisis of crumbling bridges and tunnels.

Meanwhile, the Build Back Better bill started as a \$3.5 trillion grab bag of everything that progressives want but couldn't get in the infrastructure bill. Passing as much spending as you possibly can before you lose Congress a year from now, which is essen-

By RICH LOWRY

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Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.



tially the rationale behind Build Back Better, is not a compelling reason for a historic spate of federal spending.

That legislation has been pared down to largely a child care and climate change bill. That's an unnatural pairing that came about not because those are the top two things that the public wants from Washington, but because they happen to be what Democrats think they can pass.

Only now is the White House trying to argue that the infrastructure bill and Build Back Better will address real public concerns, namely the supply chain disruptions and the inflation that is outpacing wage growth. This is clearly a tendentious, after-the-fact argument.

The White House can hope that the supply chain bottlenecks ease and inflation declines, but Biden's disastrous first year speaks to a more intractable problem with the lackluster occupant of the Oval Office himself.

Col. Ed Shames was an example for all Americans to follow

What does it mean to serve your country? Army Col. Edward Shames, the last remaining member of World War II's "Band of Brothers," certainly answered that question. He died last week at age 99.

According to his obituary, Shames was born in Norfolk, Virginia, on June 13, 1922. He answered the call to duty in August 1942, becoming a member of Easy Company, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, which historian Stephen E. Ambrose made famous in his 1992 nonfiction book "Band of Brothers."

He made his first combat jump into Normandy on D-Day and fought with Easy Company in Operation Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge in Bastogne. Because of his battlefield leadership, he received a battlefield commission as a second lieutenant on June 13, 1944. After the 101st entered Germany, Shames was the division's first member to enter Dachau concentration camp, days after its liberation. A bottle of cognac he took as war booty from Adolf Hitler's Eagle's Nest later was opened to toast his oldest son's bar mitzvah.

This week also marked the 80th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's subsequent declaration of war against Japan. Roosevelt, addressing a joint session of Congress, declared Dec. 7, 1941, as "a date which will live in infamy." Germany and the other Axis powers promptly declared war on the United States. That declara-

tion served as the call answered by hundreds of thousands more Americans like Shames to serve their country.

These anniversaries and Shames' story got me thinking about the Greatest Generation, the term coined by journalist Tom Brokaw in his 1998 book with that title. "The Greatest Generation" refers to those who came of age during the Great Depression and served our country during World War II. Brokaw wrote that these men and women fought not for fame and recognition, but because it was "the right thing to do."

Recently, commentator Lara Logan went on Fox News and compared Dr. Anthony Fauci to the Nazi doctor Josef Mengele. Mengele was nicknamed "the angel of death" for the lethal experiments he conducted on Jews. This is just one example of many from those on the fringe right comparing vaccine and mask mandates to the Holocaust. I wonder how Shames, as a witness to the atrocities of Dachau, would have responded to the comparisons made by Logan and others.

The coronavirus has now killed more Americans than the combat deaths from every war or conflict combined in our history. There have been more than 790,000 deaths due to the virus, compared with 666,441 combat deaths. The Civil War is noted as having the highest death toll of any war in American history. Two-thirds of the deaths in the Civil War were not sustained from combat but rather from viruses, parasites or bacteria.

Despite the devastating numbers of Americans lost, too many are still complaining about getting a vaccine or wearing a mask

testing measures. Yes, the local government has failed to protect those who elected and appointed them into their offices and positions but that doesn't mean that the folks making decisions for us all are not incapable of determining what is required to keep everyone as safe as possible. Recognizing failure and learning from it is a vital ability for us all and especially for those in leadership positions.

The CNMI's once-enviable SARS-CoV-2 control measure record is part of the past (especially when a small island like Saipan is currently recording far more daily cases than entire nearby nations such as Japan, which has about 127 million people vs our 55,000 residents). Regrettably sad, yes, but that's all in the rear-view mirror and new challenges require immediate attempts to remedy and moderate the current situation. Hey, I loathe the virus and the fear, death, suffering, disruptions and hardships that it's caused but I'm also willing to do whatever needs to be done to ensure my health and safety and that of my neighbors and fellow CNMI residents. I'm certain that most people feel exactly the same ways when it comes to the virus and associated control measures. No one is having fun or taking

during many indoor activities. With the omicron variant spreading throughout the region, the country and the world, we are faced with the reality that the life we are living with the coronavirus will not be going away soon.

Americans have always been asked to serve their country during times of crisis. Military service is one way to serve your country, but it is not the only way. When we act in ways that benefit our fellow citizens, we are serving our country. The answer on how we can serve one another is as simple as putting a cloth over our noses and mouths. Despite the attempt by Gov. Mike Parson's administration to keep it from the public, Missouri's own health department found that mask mandates save lives.

Considering the extraordinary bravery and self-sacrifice of service members like Col. Edward Shames, is the self-sacrifice of wearing a mask really too much to ask?

By LYNN SCHMIDT

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Lynn Schmidt is a columnist and Editorial Board member of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Act now

I understand that the culture of the CNMI is one that values respect and I'm not so much looking to assign blame as I am for us, as a community, to realize and act upon the fact that current efforts to control the SAR-CoV-2 virus (primarily now the delta variant but soon to be supplanted by the omicron variant) are failing.

A limited, hard 10-14 day lockdown and curfew (with allowances for essential services, obtaining supplies, food, and health care) instituted two-three weeks ago would have given decision-makers and health care providers time to prepare for what is to come. This lockdown would have come at a high cost but one that will be far less than the eventual cost of allowing the virus to run rampant through the community.

Now an even longer lockdown period will have to be considered, along with more aggressive and intrusive tracking and






joy in all of this, but, at the same time, we are all in it together. I'm reliant on your actions to keep me safe just as you are relying on me to do my part in being a good citizen.

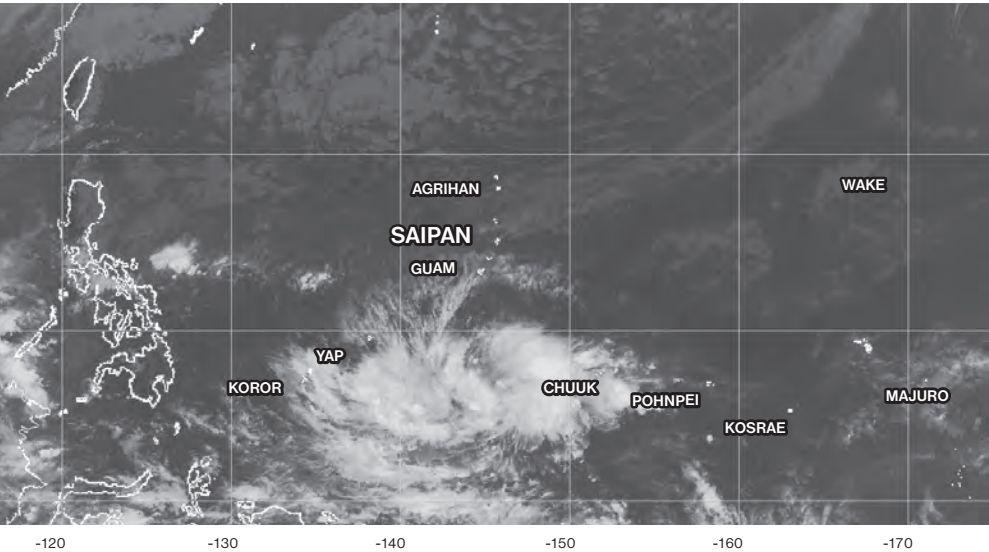
To the politicians seemingly missing in action and the beleaguered bureaucrats toiling without adequate leadership, act now. Consult the best infectious disease experts possible and seek out other solutions that are working for small, isolated, and remote communities. Be willing to accept contrary opinions and to be flexible in your responses—stick with what works and trash what doesn't and move on. Understand and accept that the pandemic is not over and new variants are on the way, especially given that poor areas with low-vaccination rates like those in parts of Africa, South America, the Middle East, Central and Southeast Asia will continue to be the breeding grounds of new mutant strains until full vaccination rates are achieved. Know that the citizens of the CNMI are looking to you; so stand up and lead, there have never been more important reasons to do so than right now.

Mark Farmer

Garapan, Saipan

The Weather

| 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|--|-----|
| TODAY | | TUESDAY | | WEDNESDAY | | THURSDAY | | FRIDAY | |
|  | |  | |  | |  | |  | |
| Partly sunny and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph. | | Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph. | | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | | Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. | | Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. | |
| 86° | 77° | 86° | 77° | 87° | 78° | 86° | 77° | 86° | 77° |
| YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE | | | | | | | | | |



PICTURE TIME: 8:01 AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line is seen just north of Saipan and has continued its southward push during the overnight hours. Radar imagery shows abundant, but small, showers quickly moving through the area. Latest scatterometer pass shows northeast winds of 15 to 20 mph over the Marianas with winds increasing to around 30 mph up near Pagan. Seas around Guam and the CNMI are currently around 10 feet, increasing up to 13-14 feet around the far northern islands.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

onds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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| MICRONESIA | | | ▲ ▼ °F |
|---------------|---------------|-----------|--------|
| Guam and Rota | Thunderstorms | 86° / 78° | |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | 85° / 78° | |
| Yap | Thunderstorms | 85° / 79° | |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorms | 86° / 80° | |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorms | 84° / 78° | |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorms | 87° / 78° | |
| Majuro | Thunderstorms | 85° / 80° | |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Today | 6:33 AM | 5:48 PM |
| Tuesday | 6:34 AM | 5:48 PM |
| Wednesday | 6:34 AM | 5:49 PM |
| Thursday | 6:35 AM | 5:49 PM |
| Friday | 6:36 AM | 5:49 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|-----------|----------|---------|----------|
| Today | - | 1:30 AM | 1:49 PM |
| Tuesday | - | 2:18 AM | 2:24 PM |
| Wednesday | - | 3:06 AM | 3:00 PM |
| Thursday | - | 3:54 AM | 3:38 PM |
| Friday | - | 4:43 AM | 4:19 PM |

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

| DEPARTURES | | | | ARRIVALS | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|----------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------|----------|------------------|
| SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) | | | | GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA117 | 7:20am | 8:05am | 2, 4, 6 | UA116 | 5:30am | 6:16am | 2, 4, 6 |
| UA117 | 9:50am | 10:35am | 1, 3, 5, 7 | UA174 | 8:00am | 8:46am | 1, 3, 5, 7 |
| GUAM-MANILA (MNL) | | | | MANILA (MNL)-GUAM | | | |
| UA183 | 8:00pm | 9:50pm | Daily | UA184 | 10:40pm | 4:30am+1 | 2, 5 |
| UA184 | 10:55pm | 4:45am+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 | UA184 | 10:55pm | 4:45am+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) | | | | MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA117/183 | 7:20am | 9:50pm | 2, 4, 6 via Guam | UA184/174 | 10:40pm | 6:16am+1 | 5 via Guam |
| UA117/183 | 9:50am | 9:50pm | 1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam | UA184/174 | 10:40pm | 8:46am+1 | 2 via Guam |
| UA184/174 | 10:55pm | 6:16am+1 | 1, 3 via Guam | UA184/174 | 10:55pm | 6:16am+1 | 4, 6, 7 via Guam |
| UA184/174 | 10:55pm | 8:46am+1 | 4, 6, 7 via Guam | UA184/174 | 10:55pm | 8:46am+1 | 4, 6, 7 via Guam |
| SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN) | | | | INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN | | | |
| 7C3406 | 3:10PM | 6:55PM | 6 | 7C3405 | 8:30AM | 2:10PM | 6 |
| TW9308 | 3:20PM | 8:00PM | 4, 5 | OZ6233 | 9:00AM | 2:30PM | 6 |
| OZ6243 | 4:00PM | 7:40PM | 6 | TW9307 | 10:00AM | 2:20PM | 4, 5 |

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MAY 18, 2021

| SAIPAN TO ROTA | | | | ROTA TO SAIPAN | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------------|
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY | FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
| 1301 | 8:30AM | 9:00AM | Daily | 3101 | 9:30AM | 10:00AM | Daily |
| 1302 | 11:00AM | 11:30AM | Daily | 3102 | 12:00AM | 12:30AM | Daily |
| 1303 | 1:30PM | 2:00PM | Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily | 3103 | 1:30PM | 3:00PM | Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri Daily |
| 1304 | 3:30PM | 4:00PM | Daily | 3104 | 4:30PM | 5:00PM | Daily |
| ROTA TO GUAM | | | | GUAM TO ROTA | | | |
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY | FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
| 3401 | 12:15 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable | 4301 | 13:00 | 13:30 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| GUAM TO TINIAN | | | | SAIPAN TO TINIAN | | | |
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY | FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
| 1201 | 7:00 | 7:15 | Temporarily Unavailable | 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily |
| 1202 | 8:00 | 8:15 | Daily | 1203 | 9:00 | 9:15 | Daily |

| TINIAN TO SAIPAN | | | |
|------------------|-----------|---------|-------------------------|
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY |
| 2101 | 7:30 | 7:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2102 | 8:30 | 8:45 | Daily |
| 2103 | 9:30 | 9:45 | Daily |
| 2104 | 10:30 | 10:45 | Daily |
| 2105 | 11:30 | 11:45 | Daily |
| 2106 | 12:30 | 12:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2107 | 13:30 | 13:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |
| 2108 | 14:30 | 14:45 | Daily |
| 2109 | 15:30 | 15:45 | Daily |
| 2110 | 16:30 | 16:45 | Daily |
| 2111 | 17:30 | 17:45 | Daily |
| 2112 | 18:30 | 18:45 | Temporarily Unavailable |

Torres: COVID-19 spike not unexpected

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said the administration has always been in a prepared mode since Day 1 of the COVID-19 pandemic and had expected the current increase in the number of positive cases to happen sometime down the road.

At a radio press briefing last Friday, Torres said they have the facilities ready and available to address this spike in COVID-19 cases.

One thing that he believes, though, is that they have done an excellent job is making sure as much as they can that as many people in the CNMI as possible has been vaccinated.

The governor said they successfully reached the Road to 80% vaccination target and now they are at 85%, which puts the CNMI in a better place compared to other territories or the nation.

“Knowing the fact that we’re already at 85%-plus makes our community a lot safer, knowing the fact that those numbers [of positive cases] have increased in the last month or so,” Torres said.

He noted that a good number of those who have tested positive but are subsequently cured and released from the facility are vaccinated patients.

“There’s a good percentage to show that because we have a high number of vaccinations,” the governor said.

Torres said their efforts to get the community vaccinated is what’s helping the CNMI maintain a low number of fatalities. Right now, the CNMI has reported just five COVID-19-related deaths.

As for Rota, the governor said they are trying to find a quarantine location. He said

he believes the COVID-19 Task Force will be flying out to Rota sometime very soon.


With respect to travel bubble program with South Korea, Torres said the CNMI is blessed and fortunate in that none of Korean tourists have tested positive.

“It makes our travel bubble [program] even better,” he said.

Torres said the South Korea government did send out last week, Thursday, a directive that they are quarantining their returning residents or passengers, except those coming from the CNMI and Singapore.

“That helps us in rebuilding back our economy and bringing back jobs,” he said.

The governor said CNMI was the first country or territory to sign a travel bubble program with South Korea back last June, while Singapore did one last October. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*



Commonwealth Judiciary Administrative Office

Guma' Hustisia / Iimwal Aweewe / House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165 • Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone (670) 236-9700/9800 • Facsimile: (670) 236-9702 • Website: www.NMIJudiciary.com

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Re-Announcement No. 22-014
POSITION TITLE:
Department:
Annual Salary Range:
Location:
Opening Date: 12/13/2021

Deputy Clerk II – Drug Court
Drug Court Division
\$23,000 - \$25,000
Saipan
Closing Date: Until Filled

Announcement No. 22-015
POSITION TITLE:
Department:
Annual Salary Range:
Location:
Opening Date: 12/13/2021

Caseworker I – Mental Health Court
Superior Court
\$35,000 - \$40,000
Saipan
Closing Date: Until Filled

Announcement No. 22-017
POSITION TITLE:
Department:
Annual Salary Range:
Location:
Opening Date: 12/13/2021

Administrative Specialist – Commonwealth Recorder
Judiciary Administrative Office
\$20,000 - \$22,000
Saipan
Closing Date: Until Filled

Candidate must provide current police and traffic clearances and proof of eligibility to work in the CNMI. Must have a valid drivers' license and operate a court vehicle. Applicants given a conditional offer of employment with the CNMI Judiciary will be required to submit to urinalysis to screen for the illegal use of drugs prior to employment. "Illegal drug" means a substance whose use or possession is controlled by federal law but that is not being used or possessed under the supervision of a licensed health care professional. (Controlled substances are listed in Schedules I-V of 21 C.F.R. Part 1308.)

Education completed in foreign colleges or universities may be used to meet the job qualification requirements if the applicant can show that foreign education is comparable to education received in accredited educational institutions in the United States.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide such evidence when applying for Judiciary jobs. Education received in foreign colleges or universities will be considered if the candidate submits an evaluation of the coursework from: (a) an accredited U.S. college or university; or (b) a private professional organization specializing in interpretation of foreign educational credentials.¹

INTERESTED PERSONS PERSONS Application forms are available at the Judiciary Administrative Office at the Guma Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice in Susupe, or at the Superior Court offices on Kotten Tinian and Centron Hustisia in Rota during normal business hours except on weekends and holidays. Completed applications, cover letter, and three references should be submitted to:


NMI Judiciary
Human Resources
Guma' Hustisia/Iimwal Aweewe/House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165
Saipan, MP 96950
Tel. (670) 236-9818
Cell. (670) 783-8592
Fax. (670) 236-9702
hr.judiciary@NMJudiciary.com

This job announcement will remain open until filled and can be seen and a printable copy of the application downloaded at <http://www.nmijudiciary.com>


The Judiciary reserves the right to rescind or cancel this JVA at any time without notice.

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(a) Credentials Evaluation Service P.O. Box 24679 Los Angeles, CA 90024
(b) Education Equivalency Evaluation World Education Services P.O. Box 745 Old Chelsea Station New York, NY 10011
(c) Education Credential Evaluators, Inc. P.O. Box 17499 Milwaukee, WI 53217
(d) International Consultants of Delaware, Inc. 914 Pickett Lane Newark, DE 19711
(e) Foundation for International Services, Inc. P.O. Box 230278 Portland, OR 97223.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22 – 029

**Opening Date: November 30, 2021
Closing Date: December 14, 2021**

POSITION TITLE:
DEPARTMENT:
LOCATION:
ANNUAL SALARY:
CONTRACT:
POSITION(S):

Human Resources Technician, Senior
COA/Human Resources
Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA
\$24,904.00 - \$33,620.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
Not Contracted
One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Human Resources Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Provides specialized administrative and paraprofessional human resources support services related to recruitment, employment testing, classification, compensation, benefits and training.
- Responds to inquiries and provides assistance of internal staff, external customers and vendors.
- Responds to questions and information requests and provides technical assistance, guidance and support regarding programs, services, policies and/or procedures.
- Performs research and verifies information; performs calculations; processes timekeeping information; compiles and maintains data for audit purposes.
- May process job vacancy announcements, schedule and conduct pre-employment testing and assist in employment interview process.
- Enters, updates and maintains employee data in information system; assists in streamlining processes and data collection procedures.
- May serve as open records custodian.
- Prepares and routes documents, certifications, meeting minutes, forms, correspondence, and information tracking documents; monitors and maintains schedules, files, logs, reports, and records; processes and distributes forms, applications and documents.
- Monitors and maintains office supplies, inventory and equipment needs; initiates purchase requisitions and tracks orders.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS and 3 years of office/human resource related experience; or, an equivalent combination of education and experience sufficient to successfully perform the essential duties of the job such as those listed above, unless otherwise subject to any other requirements set forth in law or regulation.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Education and training; Human Resource principles and practices; Program administration principles; Customer service principles; Mathematical concepts; Research methods; Database and records management principles; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Providing customer service; Responding to information requests and providing specialized administrative support; Researching and verifying information; Compiling data and processing timekeeping information; Scheduling and coordinating appointments; Filing, organizing, imaging and maintaining records and files; Preparing reports, minutes, correspondence and documentation; Managing time and prioritizing requests; Proofreading documents and forms for accuracy and completion; Performing audits, identifying errors, making corrections and recommendations; Reviewing and researching database information; Monitoring and maintaining supplies; Maintaining confidentiality of records and employment information; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.


Licensing: Valid Driver's License with appropriate class.

Physical Demands: Occasional lifting of objects, Subject to standing, walking, sitting, bending, reaching, kneeling, pushing and pulling.


All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
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Commonwealth Utilities Corporation



JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22 – 030

**Opening Date: December 1, 2021
Closing Date: December 15, 2021**

POSITION TITLE:
DEPARTMENT:
LOCATION:
ANNUAL SALARY:
CONTRACT:
POSITION(S):

Trades Assistant
Water Division
Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA
\$16,742.00 - \$22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
Not Contracted
One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily maintenance activities.
- Performing daily well and pump station facility maintenance, cleaning and monitoring;
- Assisting plumbing and chlorine maintenance crew;
- Utilizing digging equipment for locating and repairing leaks;
- Repairing and securing pressure reducer valves, main valves, service lines and laterals, and booster pumps;
- Assisting with meter installation and repair;
- Collecting water samples.
- Must be able to lift objects weighing at 40 lbs. or more.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:
Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS Diploma.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing:

- Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Business

New inflation number feeds angst against Dems' \$2T bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—Government reports on rising inflation and the potential costs of President Joe Biden's social and environment legislation raised fresh questions Friday about the bill's fate, with both sides hoping the new numbers would influence pivotal Sen. Joe Manchin.

The moderate Manchin, D-W.Va., has spent months forcing Democrats to trim the 10-year, \$2 trillion package, arguing it's too expensive and at times citing growing inflation as a reason to slow work on the bill. On Friday, the Labor Department said consumer prices grew last month at an annual rate of 6.8%, the highest in 39 years.

A separate report from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said that if many of the bill's temporary spending boosts and tax cuts were made permanent, it would add \$3 trillion to the price tag. That would more than double its 10-year cost to around \$5 trillion. Democrats called the projections from the Republican-requested report fictitious.

Manchin aides did not respond to requests for comment. Manchin said in a brief interview Thursday that he wanted to know "where we are in inflation and where we are on the true price" of the bill, adding he was "very concerned."

The latest inflation figures prompted Biden to use some of his strongest language yet, telling reporters at the White House on Friday, "I think this is the peak of the crisis." While the numbers illustrate a clear political danger for the administration, the recent performance of financial markets suggests investors don't see inflation as a long-term problem.

Friday's reports popped out two weeks before Christmas, by when Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., hopes to end months of talks among Democrats and finally push a compromise bill through the Senate. The House approved an initial version last month.

With Manchin still seeking cuts in a measure that originally cost \$3.5 trillion, the day's reports at the least increased his leverage in a tortuous process that's already seen several near-death moments caused by Democratic infighting. At worst, the numbers fueled worries that Manchin might abandon the package, sinking it.

"I don't know the answer to that," Biden said at the White House when asked if he could win Manchin's support. He said he'd talk to the lawmaker early next week.

Every Democrat in the 50-50 chamber will have to back the bill so Vice President Kamala Harris can cast a tie-breaking vote to approve it.

The political sensitivity of inflation and its impact on the Democratic bill, a collection of family services, health care and climate change priorities, was illustrated as leaders of both parties tried to spin the numbers to their advantage.

Democrats argued that the inflation report intensified the need to approve the measure. They said the legislation's spending and tax credits for health care, children's costs, education and other programs would help families cope with rising prices. Most of the bill is

paid for with tax boosts on the wealthy and big corporations.

The legislation's impact will be "reducing costs for ordinary people," Biden said.

Republicans said the legislation's expenditures would further feed inflation, which has been driven by supply chain delays making products less available and spending prompted by a strong underlying economy.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said inflation means "the average American has gotten a pay cut," adding, "It is unthinkable that Senate Democrats would try to respond to this inflation report by ramming through another massive socialist spending package in a matter of days."

Possibly mitigating the political impact of Friday's inflation numbers was that they were expected and represented a modest rise from October's 6.2%.

Adding any additional juice to the economy might worsen inflation. But the extra fiscal stimulus over the next several years in Democrats' bill would be less than 1% the size of the entire U.S. economy, making its likely inflationary impact mild, said the nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget.

Democrats limited the duration of many initiatives in their package to help contain the bill's price tag. That includes extending enhancements to the child tax credit for just one year and free, universal preschool for only six years.

It's an accounting move both parties have used to make their budget plans seem more affordable—even though they would like their proposals to be permanent and some may be extended because they are popular.



Manchin

Woman charged with stealing \$300K from California retailers

COSTA MESA, Calif. (AP)—A woman has been charged with grand theft for allegedly stealing more than \$300,000 in merchandise from retail stores in California.

Ekaterina Zharkova, 38, was arrested last month after an investigator with the California Highway Patrol's Organized Retail Theft task force saw her stealing from a Nordstrom Rack in Costa Mesa. When members of the task force searched her apartment, they found more than \$328,000 worth of stolen merchandise, the Orange County District Attorney's office said in a statement.

Investigators believe she attempted to sell stolen mer-

chandise through a luxury online consignment store.

Zharkova was charged with four felony counts of grand theft, one felony count of receiving stolen property, and seven misdemeanor counts of petty theft. She faces up to nine years in prison if convicted on all counts.

It's not known whether she has an attorney who can speak on her behalf.

The charge comes amid a rash of large-scale thefts in California in which groups of individuals brazenly rush into stores and take goods in plain sight.

"Shoplifting and other retail theft is out of control across California as a result

of reckless laws that have made the risk far less than the potential reward," District Attorney Todd Spitzer said. "These are not victimless crimes and if you engage in these kinds of outrageous theft schemes we're going to arrest you, we're going to prosecute you, and we're putting you behind bars."

In September, Zharkova pleaded not guilty to a separate felony grand theft charge and misdemeanor charge of possession of burglary tools, according to court records.

She also pleaded not guilty in a felony grand theft case in Los Angeles filed in August, the Orange County Registrar reported.

Nation



A car sits in the debris caused by a tornado in Bowling Green, Ky., Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021. AP

Crews search for the missing after devastating tornadoes

MAYFIELD, Ky. (AP)—Rescuers combed through fields of wreckage after a tornado outbreak roared across the middle of the U.S., leaving dozens dead and communities in despair.

A twister carved a track that could rival the longest on record as the stormfront smashed apart a candle factory, crushed a nursing home and flattened an Amazon distribution center.

"I pray that there will be another rescue. I pray that there will be another one or two," Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said, as crews sifted through the wreckage of the candle factory in Mayfield, where 110 people were working overnight Friday when the storm hit. Forty of them were rescued.

"We had to, at times, crawl over casualties to get to live victims," said Jeremy Creason, the city's fire chief and EMS director.

In Kentucky alone, 22 were confirmed dead by late Saturday, including 11 in and around Bowling Green. But Beshear said upwards of 70 may have been killed when a twister touched down for more than 200 miles (320 kilometers) in his state and that the number of deaths could eventually exceed 100 across 10 or more counties.

The death toll of 36 across five states includes six people in Illinois, where an Amazon facility was hit; four in Tennessee; two in Arkansas, where a nursing home was destroyed; and two in Missouri.

If early reports are confirmed, the twister "will likely go down perhaps as one of the longest track violent tornadoes in United States

history," said Victor Genzini, a researcher on extreme weather at Northern Illinois University.

The longest tornado on record, in March 1925, tracked for about 220 miles (355 kilometers) through Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. But Genzini said this twister may have touched down for nearly 250 miles (400 kilometers). The storm was all the more remarkable because it came in December, when normally colder weather limits tornadoes, he said.

Debris from destroyed buildings and shredded trees covered the ground in Mayfield, a city of about 10,000 in western Kentucky. Twisted metal sheeting, downed power lines and wrecked vehicles lined the streets. Windows and roofs were blown off the buildings that were still standing.

The missing at the candle factory included Janine Denise Johnson Williams, a 50-year-old mother of four whose family members kept vigil at the site Saturday.

"It's Christmastime and she works at a place that's making candles for gifts," her brother, Darryl Williams, said. "To give up the gift of life to make a gift. We haven't heard anything, and I'm not presuming anything. But I'm expecting for the worst."

He said Johnson Williams called her husband overnight to report the weather was getting bad, the last time anyone heard from her.

Kyanna Parsons-Perez, an employee at the factory, was trapped under 5 feet (about 1.5 meters) of debris for at least two hours until rescuers managed to free her.

In an interview with

NBC's "Today," she said it was "absolutely the most terrifying" event she had ever experienced. "I did not think I was going to make it at all."

Just before the tornado struck, the building's lights flickered. She felt a gust of wind, her ears started popping and then, "Boom. Everything came down on us." People started screaming, and she heard other workers praying.

Kentucky State Trooper Sarah Burgess said rescue crews were using heavy equipment to move rubble at the candle factory. Coroners were called to the scene and bodies were recovered, but she didn't know how many.

Rescue efforts were complicated because Mayfield's main fire station and emergency services hub were also hit by the tornado, Creason said.

After a wall at a nursing home in Mayfield collapsed, Vernon Evans said he rushed to help firefighters pull people out, only to find one resident lying dead in a few inches of water.

"All I could do is sit there and hold their head up," he said. "I never experienced nothing like this."

President Joe Biden approved an emergency disaster declaration for Kentucky on Saturday and pledged to support the affected states.

"I promise you, whatever is needed—whatever is needed—the federal government is going to find a way to provide it," Biden said.

Six people were killed in the collapse of the Amazon warehouse in Edwardsville, Illinois, with another injured worker airlifted to a hospital, fire Chief James Whitford said.

Asia

South Korea reports worst virus surge since pandemic

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—New coronavirus infections in South Korea exceeded 7,000 for the third consecutive day on Friday, as the worst surge since the start of the pandemic overwhelmed hospitals and depleted health care workforce.

Critics have blamed the spread on complacency by the government, which dramatically lowered social distancing rules at the start of November in what officials described as the first step toward restoring pre-pandemic normalcy.

Even as cases began to soar in recent weeks, officials were initially hesitant to tighten social distancing, citing exhaustion and frustration by the public with restrictions and their impact on livelihoods. But as the contagious delta variant reduced the effectiveness of vaccines and most people in their 60s or older are still waiting for their booster shots, and the first cases of omicron were discovered, the sense of urgency became apparent.

Prime Minister Kim Bo-kyum, the No. 2 behind President Moon Jae-in, said during a virus meeting that the country could be forced to take further “extraordinary” measures if it fails to slow the spread of the virus soon.

Officials issued administrative orders requiring hospitals around the country to designate 2,000 more beds combined for COVID-19 treatment.

The increased capacity will be used to ease the crush on hospitals in Seoul and the



A medical worker wearing protective gear in a booth takes a sample from a woman at a temporary screening clinic for the coronavirus in Seoul, South Korea, Friday, Dec. 10, 2021. AP

nearby metropolitan region, where around 90% of intensive care units are already occupied. Officials said more than 1,200 virus patients in the greater capital area who required hospitalization were being forced to wait at home as of Friday morning because of bed shortages.

Officials have revamped their medical response policy so that most mild cases can be treated at home. While around 20,500 are receiving home care, some doctors' groups say the new approach puts lives at risk.

Kim said the government will also speed up the administration of booster shots by shortening the interval between the second and third vaccine injections from the current four or five months to three months starting next week.

“If it becomes clear that we aren’t succeeding in reversing this crisis situation within the next few days, the government

will have no other choice but to employ extraordinary anti-virus measures, including strong social distancing,” he said.

South Korea has reported a daily average of more than 5,800 infections while adding more than 41,000 cases in the past seven days alone, pushing the national caseload to 503,000. The country’s death toll stood at 4,130 after 53 virus patients died in the past 24 hours.

In allowing larger social gatherings, longer indoor dining hours at restaurants and fully reopening schools in November, officials predicted that the country’s improving vaccination rates will help suppress hospitalizations and fatalities even if the virus continues to spread.

However, serious cases and deaths have soared among people in their 60s or older, including those whose immunities have waned after being inoculated early in the vaccine rollout that began in February.

Republic of the Congo earlier this week and have been isolated, the health ministry said.

Taiwan records first omicron case in traveler from Africa

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan has recorded its first case of the omicron variant in a passenger who recently traveled to the southern African country of Eswatini, health officials said Saturday. The passenger, a Taiwanese woman in her 30s who returned on Dec. 8, is now in quarantine in hospital, according to the Central Epidemic Command Center, which is in charge of the island’s pandemic response. Passengers who sat near her on the plane have tested negative so far. Taiwan reported 10 new coronavirus cases on Saturday, all of which were identified in travelers entering from abroad. The self-ruling island has a strict two-week quarantine on arrival and has sealed its borders off to all but residents and citizens, with few exceptions. There is little community transmission within its borders of the disease and there has been few restrictions on movement internally in recent months. Mask wearing is nearly universal.

World

S. African doctors see signs omicron is milder than delta

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—As the omicron variant sweeps through South Africa, Dr. Unben Pillay is seeing dozens of sick patients a day. Yet he hasn’t had to send anyone to the hospital.

That’s one of the reasons why he, along with other doctors and medical experts, suspect that the omicron version really is causing milder COVID-19 than delta, even if it seems to be spreading faster.

“They are able to manage the disease at home,” Pillay said of his patients. “Most have recovered within the 10

to 14-day isolation period.” said Pillay.

And that includes older patients and those with health problems that can make them more vulnerable to becoming severely ill from a coronavirus infection, he said.

In the two weeks since omicron first was reported in Southern Africa, other doctors have shared similar stories. All caution that it will take many more weeks to collect enough data to be sure, their observations and the early evidence offer some clues.

According to South Africa’s National Institute for Communicable Diseases:

■ Only about 30% of those hospitalized with COVID-19 in recent weeks have been seriously ill, less than half the rate as during the first weeks of previous pandemic waves.

■ Average hospital stays for COVID-19 have been shorter this time - about 2.8 days compared to eight days.

■ Just 3% of patients hospitalized recently with COVID-19 have died, versus about 20% in the country’s earlier outbreaks.

UK seeks unity at G7 meeting over Russia’s ‘malign behavior’

LIVERPOOL, England (AP)—Top diplomats from the Group of Seven industrialized nations met Saturday in Liverpool for talks dominated by Russia’s buildup of troops near Ukraine’s border and what host country Britain called Moscow’s “malign behavior” around the world.

The U.K. called for “a

show of unity against global aggressors” as it welcomed U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other G-7 foreign ministers amid the Russia-Ukraine crisis and tensions with China and Iran.


“We need to defend ourselves against the growing threats from hostile actors,”

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said as she opened the meeting of foreign ministers from the U.K., the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. “And we need to come together strongly to stand up to aggressors who are seeking to limit the bounds of freedom and democracy.”

COVID-19 BRIEFS

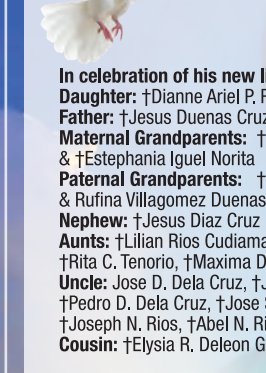
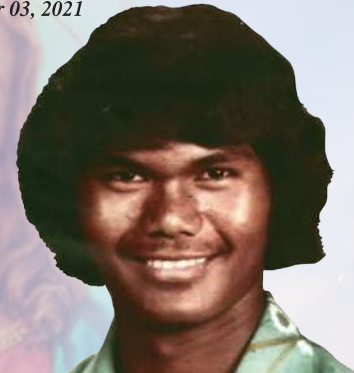
Japan confirms 8 more cases of new coronavirus variant

TOKYO (AP)—Health officials in Japan have confirmed eight more cases of the new omicron variant of the coronavirus, bringing the country’s total to 12, the government said Friday. The eight tested positive for the virus when they arrived at Japanese airports from late November to earlier this month, the health ministry said in a statement. Two of them, a woman in her 30s and a boy, arrived from Namibia on Nov. 28 on the same flight as a Namibian diplomat who was Japan’s first confirmed case of the omicron variant, Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiji Kihara said. Japan eased border controls last month as it gradually expanded social and economic activities, but has since restored a ban on foreign entrants and limited daily arrivals to 3,500 people. The transport ministry briefly asked international airlines to stop accepting new bookings on flights to Japan, but withdrew the measure after facing criticism that it was too strict. The six others confirmed Friday arrived from the United States, Mozambique and Democratic



†GEORGE NORITA RIOS

Lovingly known as “Uncle Bozu”
Born to Life on February 23, 1968
Called to Eternal Life on December 03, 2021

In celebration of his new life, he now joins:
Daughter: †Dianne Ariel P. Rios
Father: †Jesus Duenas Cruz
Maternal Grandparents: †Joaquin Sablan Rios Quidachai & †Estephania Iguel Norita
Paternal Grandparents: †Pedro Cepeda Dela Cruz & Rufina Villagomez Duenas
Nephew: †Jesus Diaz Cruz II
Aunts: †Lillian Rios Cudiamat, †Rita C. Tenorio, †Maxima DLC, Pangelinan
Uncle: Jose D. Dela Cruz, †Joaquin D. Dela Cruz, †Pedro D. Dela Cruz, †Jose S. Rios, †Mariano Norita, †Francisco N. Rios, †Joseph N. Rios, †Abel N. Rios
Cousin: †Elysia R. Deleon Guerrero

His loving memories will forever live in the hearts of his:
Spouse: Sayuri P. Rios
Mother: Maria Rios Cruz
Children:
 • (George Jr. S. Cruz) & Adrienne Ancheta
 • (Rayna) & Jay Mality & children
 • (Rayner) & Roxy Sekool & children
 • (Jersey Sekool) & Jurissa
 • (Jason S. Rios) & Joann Besenio & Taleia Ariel
 • (Jerica Sekool) & Jakey boy
 • (Magnolia S. Rios) & Matt Crabb

Brothers & Sisters:
Juan Diaz Cruz & Beth Cruz (JP Cruz, Jesse Cruz, Carmen Cruz)
Tina Marie Cruz & Jay Stephen
Franklin Joel R. Cruz & Elsianna T. Cruz (Victor Joel S. Igitol, Vyonika Jessalin I. Cruz)
Eleniang R. Cruz

Maternal Aunts & Uncles: David N. Rios, Esperanza R. Taitano, Juanita R. Deleon Guerrero, Serafina N. Rios, Moses N. Rios, Jane R. Iderbel, Mariano N. Rios

Paternal Aunts & Uncles: Anna Dela Cruz

He will be greatly missed by numerous grandchildren, children, Nieces, Nephews, Godchildren, Cousins, Aunts, Uncles, Friends and Families

Mass of Intention is being offered at Nuestra Señora Bithen de los Remedios Parish, Tanapag, at 6:00 PM.
 Nightly Rosary is being held at the Cruz residence in Tanapag at 7:00PM.

On 14th day of December, 2021, his remains will be escorted from CHCC to the Nuestra Señora Bithen de los Remedios Parish at 8:30AM. Mass of Christian Burial for our beloved George will be celebrated at 10:30AM, followed immediately by interment at Tanapag Public Cemetery where he will be laid to rest.

Please join us in prayer.
 Si Yu'us Ma'ase, Olomwaay, Ke Kmal Mesaul, Ghilisow, Kinisou Chapur, and Thank you.
THE FAMILY

Health & Wellness

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Tan Siu Lin
Foundation

I'm seeing more reports about how nutrition may help us fight against COVID-19. No one is saying we can totally avoid the disease or cure it if we eat right. But the case for improving our diets to get through this pandemic is certainly strong.

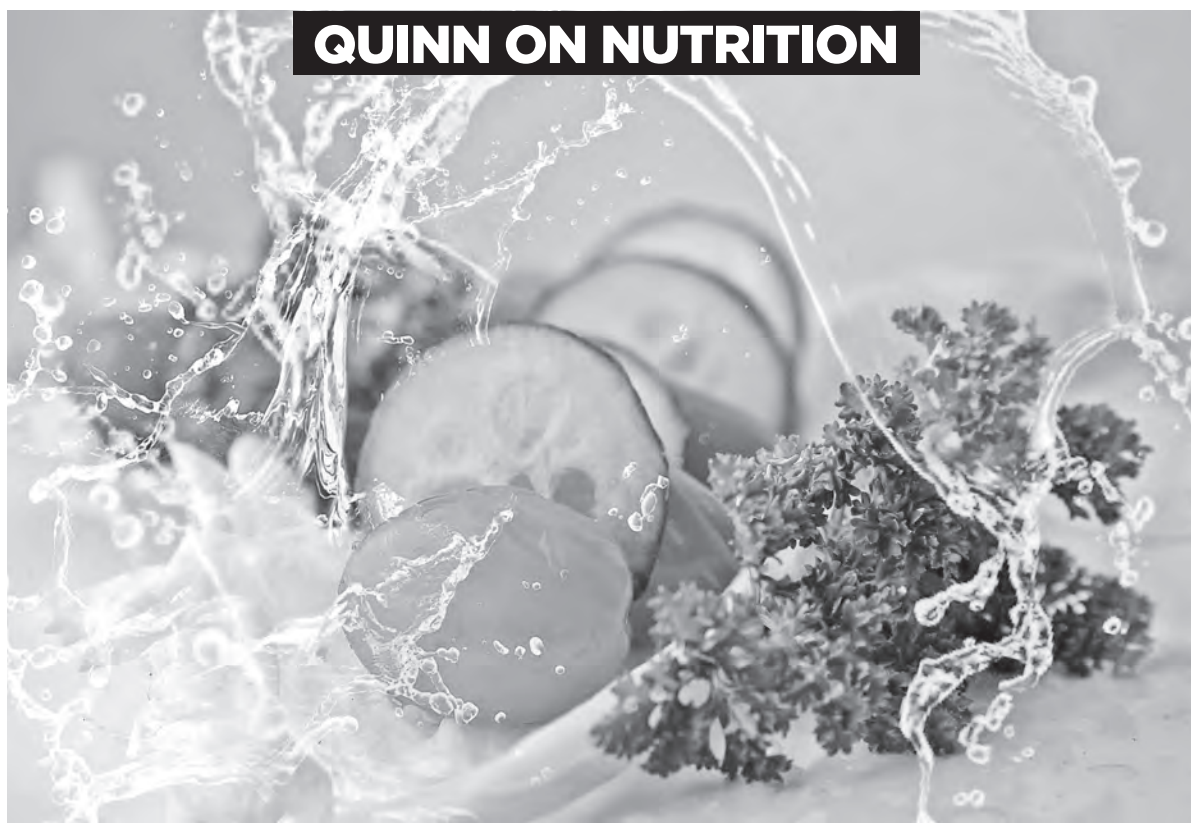
Our immune system, after all, is made from the components we find in food. And like a well-tuned football team, a strong immune system needs the right balance of individual nutrients working together. Those include protein plus vitamins (such as A, C, E, B6 and B12) and minerals such as iron and zinc. And we get these substances when we eat a balanced diet that includes foods such as eggs, meat, fish, poultry, soy, a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, nuts and dairy foods.

Without a doubt, say experts, the foods we choose to eat (or not eat) have a profound effect on our immune system and susceptibility to disease.

Here are some ideas: Take a look at your plate. Does it contain a good source of protein? Is there a variety of green, red, orange and yellow (M&M's don't count) fruits and vegetables? Does it include whole grains? If not, a lack of key nutrients may lower your resiliency to infectious disease.

Don't put too many men on the field. Supplements can help if our diets lack certain nutrients, but don't overdo it. Zinc, for example, is needed to enhance our immune system and is found primarily in oysters, shellfish, meat, pork, poultry, beans and fortified cereals. Excessively high doses of zinc supplements, however, can actually reduce the body's ability to fight disease.

Eat your veggies and other plant-



How a healthy diet may help us get through the pandemic

By Barbara Quinn
MONTEREY HERALD

based foods. Last year, before vaccines were available and before the highly contagious delta variant had raised its ugly head, researchers in

the United States and Britain conducted a phone survey on people who had tested positive to COVID-19. People who reported eating more

plant-based foods (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and vegetable oils) had a slightly lower (9%) risk of developing COVID-19 than the folks

with lower intakes. And among the people who did contract COVID-19, those who ate more plant-based foods had a 41% lower risk for developing severe symptoms.

Get your omega-3s. Also known as fish oils, these fats (DHA and EPA) fight against chronic inflammation. Some studies suggest the presence of omega-3s in our blood may help lessen the severity of COVID-19. Besides fatty fish like salmon, sardines, tuna and mackerel, other forms of these fats are found in flaxseed, walnuts and in some fortified foods.

Consider vitamin D. A deficiency of this vitamin can increase our risk for getting an infectious disease, say researchers. Until we know more, it's a good idea to make sure we get the recommended daily dose of 400 to 800 IU vitamin D a day.

Deal with stress. Yes, this does have to do with nutrition. Fear and distress can trigger hormones that drive us to the comfort of foods that feed us little more than sugar, fat and extra calories. Stress busters include exercise, prayer and meditation. And don't skimp on sleep! Sleep fortifies the body's immune function.

Now more than ever, say experts, we need to make healthful food a top priority to reduce our susceptibility and lingering complications from COVID-19. Let's do that.

Barbara Quinn-Intermill is a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator affiliated with Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula. She is the author of "Quinn-Essential Nutrition" (Westbow Press, 2015). Email her at to barbara@quinnessentialnutrition.com.) ©2021 MediaNews Group, Inc. Visit at montereyherald.com. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

COVID-19 research: Fact, fiction or something in-between

By JOEL STREED
MAYO CLINIC NEWS NETWORK

Q There are so many studies out there regarding COVID-19 and vaccinations for people to read and react to. How do we know/decide which study is accurate and worthwhile for patients and which studies aren't when it comes to COVID-19?

A "There is more information on the internet than anyone can digest," says Melanie Swift, M.D., infectious disease physician at Mayo Clinic. "It can be difficult to know what to believe. Depending on who is running the website or sharing their interpretation of the medical studies, it may be reliable, but it might be a misinterpretation of the data or completely falsified information."

Here are some tips:

- Studies that are indexed in PubMed, are published in reputable journals, and have undergone scientific peer review are reputable.
- Studies that are searchable in Google Scholar may have undergone peer review as well, but might

be a "preprint" that has not yet undergone peer review or been accepted by a reputable scientific journal. Preprints are labelled as such and should be interpreted with caution.

■ Use trusted sources like: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases (a branch of the National Institutes of Health) - these websites will end in .gov Mayo Clinic and other academic medical centers Medical professional societies like the American Medical Association or the Infectious Diseases Society of America

Beware of:

- Websites that feature medical experts who are not trained in a relevant specialty or endorsed by a reputable medical center or legitimate medical society. "Infectious diseases or pulmonary and critical care medicine specialists are ideal sources for COVID-19 information. If the website or organization features just one or two doctors from unrelated specialties, be skeptical," says Swift.
- Social media postings from individuals sharing opinion, anecdotes, or their interpretation of medical



A medical staffer prepares a dose of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine at a vaccination pop-up site at P.S. 19 on Nov. 8, 2021 in the Lower East Side in New York City.

MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY IMAGES/TNS

studies. "People will commonly state they have done their own "research" but this may mean they only searched for studies that support their bias. These individuals may not have the expertise to judge the validity of a medical study, may be justifying their personal beliefs or promoting a political agenda," Swift adds.

■ Claims for alternative or "miracle" drugs that sound unrealistic,

without studies published in reputable medical journals. When highly effective treatments are confirmed through valid scientific studies, they are publicized by the CDC, medical centers, medical societies, and reliable media outlets.

"The National Library of Medicine provides a helpful tutorial on how to evaluate a health-related website while the Surgeon General

recommends a quick health misinformation checklist," says Swift.

Some of the tips they offer include:

- Did you check with the CDC or local public health department to see whether there is any information about the claim being made?
- Did you ask a credible health care professional such as your doctor or nurse if they have any additional information?
- Did you type the claim into a search engine to see if it has been verified by a credible source?
- Did you look at the "About Us" page on the website to see if you can trust the source?
- If you're not sure, don't share!

Information in this post was accurate at the time of its posting. Due to the fluid nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, scientific understanding, along with guidelines and recommendations, may have changed since the original publication date. ©2021 Mayo Clinic News Network. Visit newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Life & Style

Jussie Smollett guilty verdict latest in polarizing case

CHICAGO (AP)—Jussie Smollett's conviction Thursday for lying to police about a racist, homophobic attack came nearly three years after his report of a horrifying hate crime quickly became part of a polarized political landscape, with people—including the president of the United States—weighing in from all over.

A prosecutor said the verdict was “a resounding message by the jury that Mr. Smollett did exactly what we said he did”—recruit two brothers to fake an attack so it could be recorded by a surveillance camera and posted on social media for publicity.

The brothers testified that the former “Empire” actor paid them \$3,500 for the hoax and gave them lines to yell, including about “MAGA country,” an apparent reference to then-Pres-

ident Donald Trump's “Make America Great Again” slogan.

The report made headlines around the world and prompted a massive manhunt in Chicago, with roughly two dozen police joining the investigation. It also drew criticism from Trump, who called the police department's handling of the case “an absolute embarrassment to our country.”

“Not only did Mr. Smollett lie to the police and wreak havoc here in the city for weeks on end for no reason whatsoever, but then he compounded the problem by lying under oath to a jury,” special prosecutor Dan Webb said after Thursday's verdict.

Smollett, who is Black and gay, maintained throughout the nearly three-year legal battle that he was attacked in downtown Chicago in January



Actor Jussie Smollett, center, along with his mother Janet, second from left, returns to the Leighton Criminal Courthouse, Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021, in Chicago, after a jury reached a verdict in his trial. **AP**

2019 by people who yelled racist and anti-gay slurs and put a noose around his neck.

His attorney declared Smol-

lett's innocence again Thursday after the jury found him guilty on five of six counts of disorderly conduct for ly-

ing to police. Neny Uche said Smollett would appeal the conviction, and is “100% confident” his name will be

cleared by an appellate court.

“Unfortunately we were facing an uphill battle where Jussie was already tried and convicted in the media and then we had to somehow get the jury to forget or unsee all the news stories that they had been hearing that were negative for the last three years,” Uche told reporters after the verdict.

The jury convicted the 39-year-old on five counts of disorderly conduct—for each separate time he was charged with lying to police in the days after the alleged attack. He was acquitted on a sixth count, of lying to a detective in mid-February, weeks after Smollett said he was attacked.

Smollett stood and faced the jury, showing no visible reaction as the verdict was read. He and his family later left the courthouse without comment.

California man who sold \$1M of forged art gets 3-year term

SAN DIEGO (AP)—A Southern California man who sold \$1.1 million in forged art was sentenced Friday to three years in federal prison, prosecutors said.

Jason Harrington, 38, of Escondido, was sentenced in San Diego after pleading guilty to wire fraud earlier this year, according to the U.S. attorney's office for the Southern District of California.

Harrington sold forgeries of paintings he claimed were the work of noted conceptual and street artist Richard Hambleton, who was a colleague of Jean-Michel Basquiat and Keith Haring.

Hambleton, a Canadian

who settled in New York City, died in 2017. Some of his works have sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Harrington acknowledged that between 2018 and 2020, he sold forgeries to at least 15 people and galleries, including some depicting Hambleton's famous black-silhouetted “Shadowman” theme from the early 1980s, prosecutors said.

“To make the forged art appear authentic, Harrington lied to prospective buyers regarding the provenance of the art,” including providing them with fake letters of authenticity from supposed owners, the U.S. attorney's office said in a statement.

Banksy creates T-shirt to help statue-toppling defendants

LONDON (AP)—Hundreds of people lined up Saturday in the English city of Bristol to get the latest work by elusive street artist Banksy—a T-shirt created to help four defendants charged over the toppling of a local statue of a slave trader.

The gray shirt features the word Bristol above the empty plinth on which the statue of 17th-century slave merchant Edward Colston long stood, with a rope hanging from it and debris scattered around.

Anti-racism demonstrators pulled down the statue and dumped it in Bristol harbor in June 2020 amid global protests sparked by the police killing of a Black American man, George Floyd.

Four people have been charged with criminal damage over the statue's felling and



Customers inside Rough Trade in Bristol, England, Saturday Dec. 11, 2021, hold T-shirts designed by street artist Banksy, being sold to support four people facing trial accused of criminal damage in relation to the toppling of a statue of slave trader Edward Colston. **AP**

are going on trial next week.

“I've made some souvenir shirts to mark the occasion,” Banksy said on social media Friday. “Available from various

outlets in the city from tomorrow. All proceeds to the defendants so they can go for a pint.”

Banksy said the T-shirts cost 25 pounds (\$33) and are

limited to one per customer.

Banksy's identity has never been confirmed, but he began his career spray-painting walls and bridges in Bristol, a port city in southwest England. Some of his works have sold for millions of dollars at auction.

Colston made a fortune transporting enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas on Bristol-based ships. He was a major benefactor to Bristol, with streets and institutions named for him—some of which have been renamed since the statue-felling sparked a debate about racism and historical commemoration.

City authorities fished the Colston statue out of the harbor and say it will be placed in a museum, along with placards from the Black Lives Matter demonstration.

Sisters' quarrel puts mother in a tough spot

DEAR ABBY: My two daughters are not speaking to each other. “Amy,” the older, claims her sister started it. “Lisa,” the younger, claims Amy took Lisa's son out to dinner and never told her. (This happened while he was living with me—another long story.)

Amy has had us at her house for Christmas for the past seven years. Lisa wants to have Christmas at her home this year. She told her aunt that if I don't go there for Christmas, she will never speak to me again. I have tried hard to get Amy to make up with Lisa. I think Lisa wants things to go back to the way they were. (Amy doesn't know what her sister said to their aunt.)

It feels to me like Lisa is asking me to pick which daughter I love more. How can I handle this without losing a daughter?

IN THE MIDDLE IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR IN THE MIDDLE: Handle this by telling Amy that because you have celebrated Christmas at her home for the last seven years, you will be spending this one with Lisa. And if she gives you an argument, tell her that from now on you will be alternating celebrations with her sister because you do not want to be forced into the position of having to choose one daughter over the other.

DEAR ABBY: I am a 68-year-old man, married for 45 years. I have cheated on my wife for most of them. Am I sorry about it? No.

My wife shut me out of her life 25 years ago. She has her bedroom, and I have mine. Why did I stay with her? We had adopted two babies 30 years ago, and I wanted to give them an education and a good start in life, which is what we did.

How do I treat her? I treat her well, I think. I help her with the housework, keep our home in good condition inside and out, and she has her own car. I take her out for dinner once a week and we go dancing every Saturday night at the club. I'm a moderate drinker and nonsmoker. I bathe four or five times a week. So, tell me, Abby. What's WRONG with me? If you decide to print my letter, perhaps I'll have an answer. Thanks, Abby. I enjoy your column very much.

P.S. Would I cheat on my wife if the opportunity presented itself in the future? Darned right I would!

NO REGRETS

DEAR NO REGRETS: If you are asking me what's wrong with you for staying in your marriage, my answer

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



would be that you did it for three decades for the sake of your children. I would add that since they are now all adults, it may be that you eventually adjusted to the lack of intimacy with your wife, so you substituted women who were available.

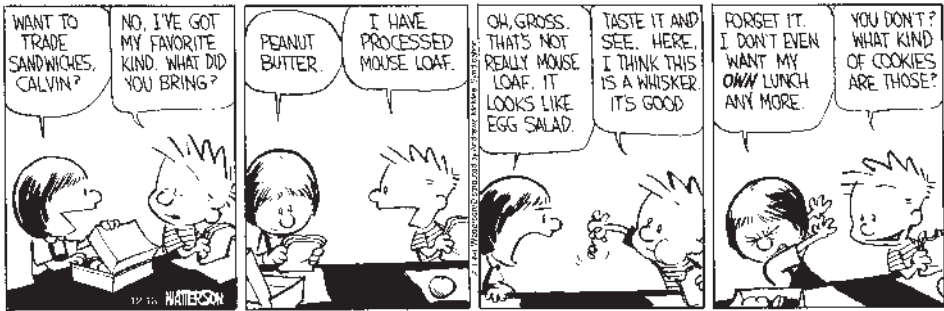
However, if you are asking me why your wife shut you out of her life 25 years ago, the only person who can answer that question is her. It may not be too late to ask.

Good advice for everyone—teens to seniors—is in “The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It.” To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

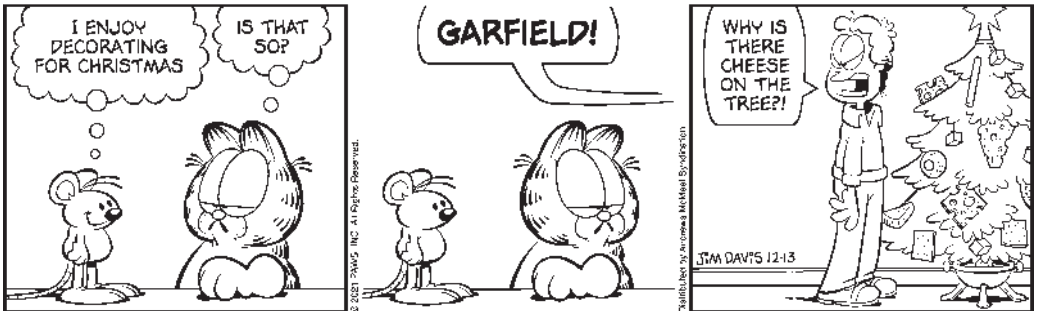
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



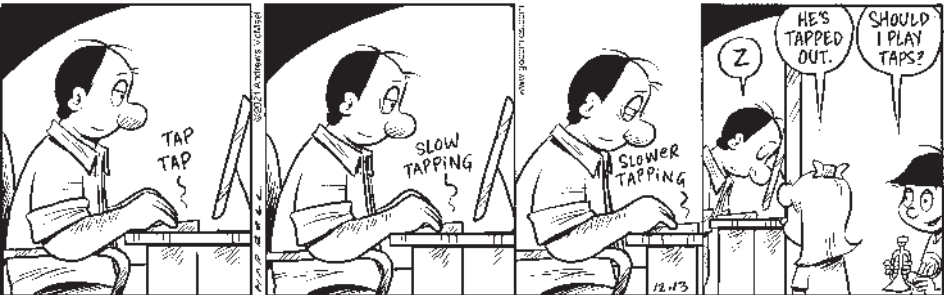
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



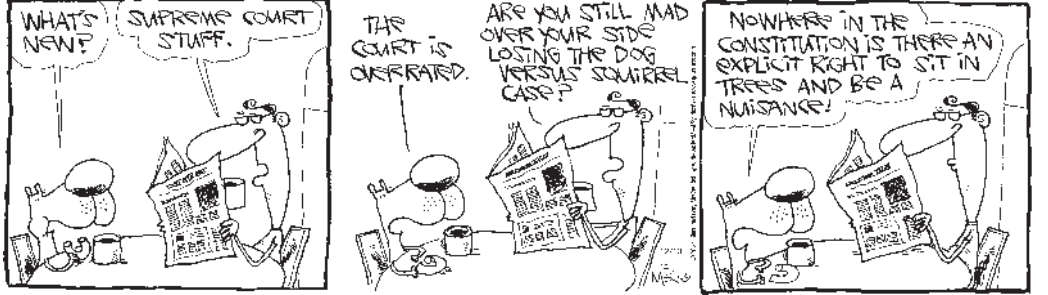
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 41 Milky gem 43 Make a mess of 45 Turkey's capital 47 Dadaist Jean 48 Miss Piggy's pronoun 49 Alaskan crustaceans 54 Bit of wit 55 — circle 56 Noon, on a clock 57 Flavor enhancer, for short 58 Informative 59 Finale

DOWN 1 Guffaw 2 "Do — say!" 3 Under-standing 4 Sign up anew 5 California city 6 Weir 7 Cake finishers 8 The very thing 9 Henry VIII, e.g. 10 Furniture brand 11 Quick look 16 Sailor

20 Two-way 21 Face-book's Mark, informally 22 Oklahoma tribe 23 Tito 27 Up to 29 Wicked 30 Painter 32 Magritte 33 Mama's mate 34 Harms 37 Actress Ellen 39 Battle call 42 Jazz singer Cleo 44 "Fresh Air" aier 45 Clock radio toggle 46 Entre — 50 SSE's opposite 51 Chopper 52 Crib 53 Punker Vicious

Solution time: 26 mins.

Last Friday's Answer 12/13

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Taylor Swift, 32; Jamie Foxx, 54; Steve Buscemi, 64; Wendie Malick, 71.

Happy Birthday: Get your house in order, and enjoy your surroundings. A positive attitude will help you excel this year and encourage you to make the most out of what you already have. Getting back to the basics will help you discover the meaning of life, love and happiness. Your goal is peace of mind. Explore the possibilities and what matters to you most. Your numbers are 2, 10, 19, 27, 34, 40, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Downplay your emotions, and you'll avoid giving someone the upper hand. The less personal information you share, the easier it will be for you to advance. Focus on what you do best, and you'll outmatch anyone who challenges you. ***

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't let a change of plans ruin your day. Keep busy, and you will accomplish what you set out to do. A project you put in play will pay off. Avoid joint ventures, but don't hesitate to move forward alone. ***

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): You'll have plenty of energy, so be sure to use it wisely. Focus on how much you can accomplish. Say little and do a lot. How much you achieve will result in opportunity and advancement. Trust in yourself and your abilities. ****

CANCER (June 21-July 22): It's OK to change your mind or head in a different direction. Take care of matters that will improve your life. Don't let your emotions or an outsider mess with decisions concerning investments

or your physical and emotional well-being. **

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Participate in events that have something to offer. What you learn will broaden your outlook and help you venture down a new and exciting path. Take a unique approach to life and what you do, and you will satisfy your soul. *****

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Someone will disappoint you. Don't trust what others say, and don't follow someone for the wrong reason. Take care of your needs, health and finances, and you'll avoid regret. Don't let anger set in when taking care of business is required. ***

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Say what's on your mind, but be diplomatic. Don't make unnecessary changes that will upset your budget. Put a limit on spending. Offer peace, joy and affection instead of lavish gifts. Focus on long-term plans, not shortcuts. ***

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Control your emotions when dealing with peers and superiors. You can question what's going on and offer suggestions, but don't make demands. Simplicity and moderation will serve you well. Keep the momentum flowing, and positive change will follow. ***

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Disregard rumors and gossip. Be a part of the solution, tell the truth and offer positive suggestions. Make a difference, and opportunities will sprout. Don't limit what you can accomplish with silence. Stretch your mind, and you'll find a solution. *****

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Resentment will mount if you disapprove of what a friend, relative or lover is doing. Offer thoughtful input, and be willing to compromise if it will help keep the peace. Take better care of your health and well-being. Avoid emotional indulgence. **

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Touch base with people who inspire you. Getting back to the basics will help you budget wisely for upcoming festivities. A kind gesture will be worth more than a gift. Don't lose sight of what's important to you and others. ****

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Pay attention to detail, and get things done correctly and on time. Refuse to let what others do or say slow you down or lead you astray. Be true to yourself and your beliefs, and go about your business. Honor your vows. ***

Birthday Baby: You are curious, challenging and helpful. You are kind and liberating.

☾: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ☼: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ☼☼: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ☼☼☼: Aim high; start new projects. ☼☼☼☼: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 3 | | 9 | 6 | | | 4 | |
| 8 | | | | | | | 9 | 2 | 1 |
| | | 7 | | 2 | | | 5 | 6 | |
| 7 | | | 6 | | 8 | | | | |
| 1 | | 4 | | | | 6 | | 2 | |
| | | | 2 | | 7 | | | 4 | |
| | 2 | 8 | | 9 | | 3 | | | |
| 3 | 1 | 6 | | | | | | | 5 |
| | 7 | | | 3 | 4 | | 8 | | |

Difficulty Level ★

12/13

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| 4 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 8 | 5 |
| 3 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 9 |
| 5 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 4 |
| 7 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 1 |
| 6 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 7 |
| 8 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| 1 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 3 |
| 2 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 8 |

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

GINGERBREAD HOUSE DECORATION

Solution: 10 letters

ETSTHGLJCMEMPS
TNNWINTEREALIE
AAAIIDEAZLLEBNPL
LDSCMDTAILDIK
ONLTYRREDROBCNR
COWYEDERRROLOCGA
OFANCYANPRBRWLP
HOLIDAYAPIRRAS
CRLRIWSICEAUNEP
ROSSSTGCEATPORO
UOORWIIITSIHSEER
NFAKCEHNEAIEETCD
CEILINECGKSEMOH
HTETREETEXTURED
SSHAPESTRUCTURE

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Bell, Border, Cabin, Candy Cane, Cereal, Chocolate, Color, Cookies, Crunch, Detail, Door, Dots, Drops, Fancy, Fondant, Heart, Holiday, Home, Icicles, Icing, Idea, Kisses, Kits, Licorice, Lights, Mini, Mints, Peppermint, Piece, Piping, Pretzel, Roof, Shape, Snow, Sour, Sparkles, Star, Structure, Sweet, Swirl, Taste, Texture, Theme, Tree, Walls, Winter, Wreath

Last Friday's Answer: Fillers
To purchase WONDERWORD books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Robinson scores season-high 26 points, Heat beat Bulls

MIAMI (AP)—Duncan Robinson scored a season high-26 points and the Miami Heat beat the short-handed Chicago Bulls 118-92 on Saturday night.

Playing in his record-tying 174th consecutive game for Miami, Robinson shot 9 of 13 from the field, making 5 of 9 3-pointers.

"I pride myself on being available whenever the team needs me," Robinson said. "(The streak's) another milestone, but we have bigger fish to fry."

Dewayne Dedmon had 20 points and 12 rebounds, and Kyle Lowry finished with 16 points and 14 assists. Tyler Herro had 17 points, and KZ Okpala 10.

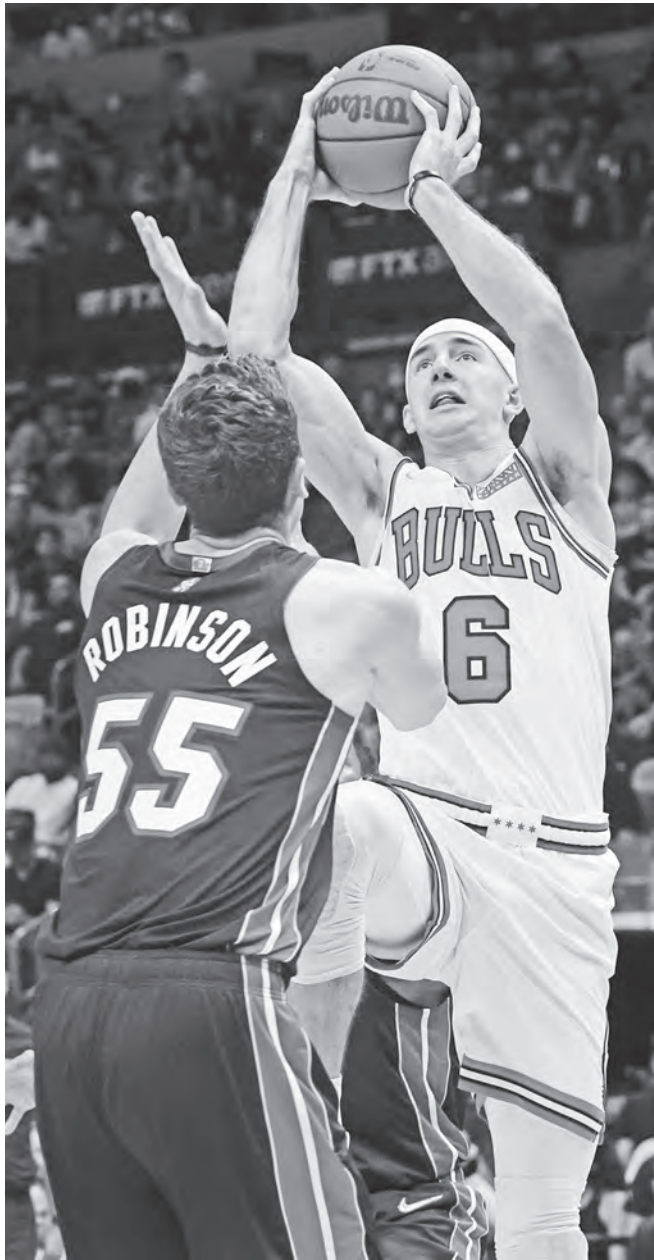
After a 15-point loss against Memphis on Monday, the Heat closed their three-game homestand with wins over Milwaukee and Chicago.

"We're just playing well together and making shots, figuring things out," Lowry said. "We don't have time to do too much and we're all aware what our roles are going to be."

The Bulls lost two additional players to health and safety protocols hours before the game. Guards Ayo Dosunmu and recently signed Stanley Johnson were ruled out, joining leading scorer DeMar DeRozan as well as Matt Thomas, Coby White, Javonte Green and Derrick Jones Jr., who are sidelined because of protocols.

"Everybody is probably a little bit out of sorts right now just because we keep losing players," Chicago coach Billy Donovan said. "We need more from different guys."

Miami was without Ca-



Chicago Bulls guard Alex Caruso (6) drives to the basket over Miami Heat guard Duncan Robinson (55) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021, in Miami. **AP**

leb Martin because of health and safety protocols. Martin scored a career-high 28 points in the victory over defending champion Milwaukee on Wednesday.

The Heat, who never trailed, led 65-52 at halftime. Chicago closed to 65-57 early in the third period before

Miami answered with a 13-3 spurt to maintain its double digit advantage.

"This one was a bit of a unique game," Miami coach Erik Spoelstra said. "It was a little bit strange. We just had to focus on the task at hand. I really liked the competitiveness and how the guys helped

each other offensively."

Zach LaVine scored 31 points for Chicago, and Lonzo Ball added 15. Nikola Vucevic also finished in double figures with 10 points but on 3-of-15 shooting.

"Nothing was falling for me tonight," Vucevic said. "I don't really have an explanation on what's going on with my shot. I just have figure it out."

76ers 102, Warriors 93

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid had 26 points and nine rebounds and the Philadelphia 76ers delayed Stephen Curry's bid to break Ray Allen's career 3-point record in a 102-93 victory over the Golden State Warriors on Saturday night.

Curry scored 18 points and shot 3 of 14 from 3-point range to move within six of matching Allen's record. Curry's next shot at the record is Monday night at Indiana in the second game of a five-game trip. He needed nine 3s against the Sixers to tie Allen's mark of 2,973 regular-season 3s from 1996-2014.

Golden State dropped to 21-5, falling a half-game behind Phoenix for the NBA lead.

Curry had one 3 attempt blocked and he had an airball on another, and was largely shut down over 36 minutes by Matisse Thybulle. Curry was 6 of 20 from the floor and the Warriors were held under 100 points for the second time this season.

Clippers 106, Magic 104

In Los Angeles, Reggie Jackson hit a step-back jumper with 2.2 seconds remaining to lift Los Angeles past Orlando.

Jackson—who had nine of his 25 points in the fourth quarter—hit a 20-footer fol-

lowing a timeout after Orlando tied it at 104 on Cole Anthony's 3-pointer with 23.6 seconds left. The Clippers held on for their third straight victory when Terrence Ross missed a 3-pointer at the buzzer.

Luke Kennard had a season-high 23 points and seven 3-pointers for Los Angeles. Terance Mann added 16 points. The Clippers were missing Paul George for the second straight game due to a right elbow contusion.

Anthony led the Magic with 23 points.

Cavaliers 117, Kings 103

In Cleveland, rookie Evan Mobley had 15 points and a season-high 15 rebounds and Cleveland beat Sacramento, matching its team record with 81 first-half points.

Isaac Okoro scored 20 points, Jarrett Allen had 19 points and 11 rebounds, and Darius Garland had 16 points and a career-best 13 assists for the Cavaliers. They held a 29-point lead at intermission and won their third in a row.

Buddy Hield led Sacramento with 21 points.

Jazz 123, Wizards 98

In Washington, Donovan Mitchell scored 28 points, Rudy Gobert had 20 points and 11 rebounds and Utah routed Washington for their seventh straight victory.

Hassan Whiteside added 18 points and 14 rebounds.

Bradley Beal scored 21 points for Washington. The Wizards lost for the fourth time in five games and for the ninth time in 14.

Nuggets 127, Spurs 112

In San Antonio, Nikola Jokic

had 35 points, 17 rebounds and eight assists and Denver avenged an earlier loss to San Antonio.

The Nuggets had a balanced effort two nights after their most lethargic performance of the season. Denver never led and was dominated in the paint and on 3-pointers in falling 123-111 to San Antonio on Thursday night.

The Nuggets were 20 for 43 on 3-pointers Saturday and matched their season high for made 3s. Lonnie Walker IV scored 16 points for San Antonio.

Grizzlies 113, Rockets 106

In Memphis, Tenn., Dillon Brooks scored 25 points, Desmond Bane added 19 points and Memphis held off Houston.

Christian Wood had 22 points and nine rebounds for Houston. Armoni Brooks provided a spark off the Houston bench, scoring 18 points.

NBA fines Wizards' Kuzma \$15K; Grizzlies' Brooks docked \$25K

The NBA has fined Washington Wizards forward Kyle Kuzma \$15,000 for directing an obscene gesture toward a fan and Memphis Grizzlies guard-forward Dillon Brooks \$25,000 for aggressively confronting a game official and failing to leave the court in a timely manner upon his ejection.

The announcements were made Friday by Byron Spruell, the president of league operations.

Kuzma's incident took place in the fourth quarter of the Wizards' 119-116 overtime win over the Detroit Pistons on Wednesday night at Little Caesars Arena. Kuzma hit a 3 with 0.6 seconds left in overtime to lift the Wizards to the victory and hand the Pistons their 10th straight loss.

Brooks was assessed his second technical foul with 27.5 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter of the Grizzlies' 104-96 loss to the Dallas Mavericks on Wednesday night at FedExForum. He had to be restrained by coaches and then directed to the locker room.

Brooks was unhappy with what he called "inconsistent" officiating during the game. He said in a news conference the officials were calling "ticky tack" fouls in the first half, then calling nothing in the second half. **(AP)**

COVID-19 concerns prompt Pacers, Raptors to cancel practices

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—The Indiana Pacers and Toronto Raptors canceled their Thursday practices in precautionary moves, citing the league's COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

Both teams made the announcements on Twitter.

Chicago forward Derrick Jones Jr. also entered the protocol Thursday, the fifth Bulls player in nine days to join the list.

And later Thursday, the Raptors announced that team president Masai Ujiri had tested positive for COVID-19 and was isolating at home.

Indiana has won twice this week — beating Washington on Monday and routing the New York Knicks on Wednesday. Pacers guard Justin Holiday has not played since entering the protocol on Nov. 30 and team officials have not yet said

whether anyone else has been ruled out. Indiana is scheduled to host Dallas on Friday. The Raptors lost to Oklahoma City at home on Wednesday night and are scheduled to host the Knicks on Friday.

Toronto has not had any positive COVID-19 tests since the season began and the Raptors have said all of their players are fully vaccinated.

Ujiri said in a statement that he, too, is fully vaccinated and has received a booster shot. He said he attended an in-person event on Sunday for his non-profit Giants of Africa at which everyone was required to be vaccinated. Ujiri said after the gala, he learned that some guests had tested positive and he subsequently tested positive.

Meanwhile, it's been a wild week for the Pacers, who snapped a four-game skid on Monday.

Then, in the midst of a season where the average attendance at Indiana's home game sunk to 13,137 entering Wednesday, tied with Detroit for a league low, coach Rick Carlisle and president of basketball operations Kevin Pritchard opted to meet with their top players to address speculation about breaking up the team and rebuilding.

"Kevin and I made it clear we want to win with this team," Carlisle said during a postgame availability in which he was coughing. "This team was put together with the idea this could work. We've been up against it with some injuries and bad luck, but that's the NBA. Trades are always possible in this business and our guys know that."

Players also were asked about the reports.

"My name is in a trade ru-

mor every day," said Myles Turner, last season's league blocks champion. "That's just part of the business."

Now there are COVID-19 concerns, too.

A win Friday would give Indiana its first three-game winning streak of the season just in time for Golden State's only visit this season Monday as Stephen Curry closes in on the league's career record for 3-pointers. He needs 10 to break Ray Allen's mark of 2,973 and if he doesn't break it Saturday in Philadelphia, he could do it in Indy.

Indiana and Toronto aren't the only teams affected by the pandemic despite 97% of all players being fully vaccinated, according to league officials.

Jones is averaging 7.0 points in his first season in Chicago. The other Bulls in the protocol are All-Star DeMar DeRozan

Vikings beat Steelers 36-28, deny last-play pass in end zone



MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Minnesota Vikings safety Harrison Smith ripped off his helmet once the victory was finally secured, after a 29-point lead on the Pittsburgh Steelers late in the third quarter evaporated into yet another teeth-clenching finish.

Smith looked exhausted and exasperated, hardly excited at all. These Vikings don't make anything easy on themselves.

Dalvin Cook rushed for 205 yards and two touchdowns in his faster-than-expected return from a shoulder injury, and the Vikings held on to beat the Steelers 36-28 by forcing an incomplete pass in the end zone on the final play Thursday night.

Ben Roethlisberger's throw to Pat Freiermuth was on target, but Smith smashed into the rookie tight end at just the right moment to dislodge the ball as Xavier Woods and Anthony Barr converged. That gave the Vikings (6-7) a critical victory after they flirted with an unforgivable loss.

"It is frustrating having to come down to the last second. It's taken a few years of my life this season, but it's good to be on this side of a close one," Barr said.

All but one of Minnesota's games this year have been decided by eight points or less, including four losses by three points or fewer.

"Never say 'over' with this team," said coach Mike Zimmer, who watched the Vikings lose 29-27 last week at previously winless Detroit on a last-play touchdown pass.

The Steelers had fared much better in these close finishes this season, but



Minnesota Vikings defenders safety Harrison Smith (22), outside linebacker Anthony Barr (55) and free safety Xavier Woods (23) break up a pass intended for Pittsburgh Steelers tight end Pat Freiermuth (88) in the end zone at the end of an NFL football game, Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021, in Minneapolis. AP

they weren't trying to erase 29-point deficits in those other situations, either.

"We're running out of time," Roethlisberger said. "I don't look at moral victories."

Just as vital as all the turf he tore up on the ground was the 17-yard catch Cook made on a seam route on third-and-9 from the Minnesota 26 with 2:38 left. That forced the Steelers to use all their timeouts, leaving Roethlisberger 96 yards and 2:16 to go after Jordan Berry pinned a punt

deep against his former team.

Roethlisberger hit Chase Claypool for 48 yards while Bashaud Breeland was committing pass interference to reach midfield. Claypool pulled in a fourth-and-1 slant to reach the Minnesota 34 but cost the Steelers a handful of seconds by celebrating the first down rather than immediately tossing the ball to the referee.

Diontae Johnson set up the last play from the 12 by taking a crossing route 12 yards out of bounds, but the Steel-

ers (6-6-1), who failed on a 2-point conversion try earlier in the fourth quarter, wound up just short this time. Last week, they hung on to beat Baltimore 20-19 by denying a 2-point try with 12 seconds remaining.

Coach Mike Tomlin wasn't all that impressed by the comeback.

"We were JV again tonight, and I'm talking up front on both sides," Tomlin said.

Star outside linebacker and NFL sack leader T.J. Watt

injured his groin early in the second quarter and did not return. The Vikings had a 300-66 advantage in total yards in the first half.

Roethlisberger, who was sacked five times, threw touchdown passes to Najee Harris, James Washington and Freiermuth in the second half. Harris ran for a score, too, as the Steelers recovered from their abysmal start.

Ahkello Witherspoon intercepted Kirk Cousins twice after halftime to fuel the rally. With

Adam Thielen sidelined by an ankle injury, Minnesota's passing attack was out of sync.

Cousins went 14 for 31 for 216 yards, hitting Justin Jefferson for a first-quarter touchdown and K.J. Osborn for a 62-yard score early in the fourth quarter that made it 36-20.

"There's some good out there. There's some bad out there. We'll have to go back and watch and see what it really was," Cousins said.

Just 11 days after Cook dislocated his shoulder, keeping him out of last week's loss at previously winless Detroit, he lined up in the backfield and enjoyed the most running room he's seen all season. Cook set a franchise record with 153 rushing yards in the first half, and he needed only 14 carries to do it. The Steelers are allowing the most average yards per rush (5.0) in the league.

The Vikings trampled the Steelers with their zone blocking scheme, creating gaping holes for Cook to burst through and minimizing the contact with his still-healing shoulder. The Vikings averaged more than 10 yards per play in the first quarter.

"Once I told 'em I'm good, I'm good," Cook said.

Minnesota's Greg Joseph pulled a 53-yard field goal left and sent his first extra point try wide right. Chris Boswell also hooked a 49-yard attempt left, just his second missed field goal of the season for Pittsburgh to end a streak of 20 straight makes. This was the first NFL game since at least 1991, as far back as Sportradar data goes for this research, with two missed field goals and a missed extra point in the first quarter.

Demaryius Thomas remembered by players for generous nature

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP)—The message from Demaryius Thomas was just to congratulate Garrett Bolles on being drafted.

It meant so much to the Denver Broncos left tackle that, even years later, he still has the exchange stored on his phone.

Thomas was always thinking of others.

The five-time Pro Bowl receiver found the time to make a difference, whether it was working with a young wideout, signing autographs, attending a football clinic or welcoming a teammate. The football community was devastated by the loss of Thomas, who died Thursday night in his suburban Atlanta home at 33—nearly six months after officially announcing his NFL retirement.

To honor him, the Broncos players will wear a decal on

their helmets Sunday against Detroit. There will also be a video tribute at the stadium and a moment of silence for the charismatic receiver.

"His smile lit up a room every time he walked in," said Bolles, who was drafted in 2017 and warmly welcomed by Thomas. "Every time we talked to him, he was always happy. I don't think I heard one negative thing out of his mouth or anything."

Thomas was that rare humble player at a position that tends to attract the brash. He quietly went about his business of catching passes and making friends.

He had many of both.

Broncos kicker Brandon McManus posted photos of the two of them together on social media with the caption: "This is who my friend was. Always Smiling. I love you DT #RIP Broken heart."

Several players remain on the Broncos roster who had ties with him from when he was in Denver for his last season in 2018, including receivers Tim Patrick and Courtland Sutton. There are a few coaches, too, and about 40 workers inside the organization. Although Broncos coach Vic Fangio never spent time with Thomas, he felt like he did through all the stories.

"Just seeing and feeling their reaction and hurt just tells me what a special player D.T. was," Fangio said.

The Broncos (6-6) plan to pay tribute to him the best way they know how Sunday—through their performance.

"We've got to put '88' in our hearts and hopefully he gives us that juice, he gives us that desire to go make the playoffs," Bolles said. "I feel like that's what we need to do for him."

Thomas' contributions in Denver went far beyond the football field. He was noted for his work with the Broncos Boys and Girls Club, along with hospital visits and his annual football camp.

Social media was filled with tributes to Thomas, who was found dead in his home in Roswell, Georgia. LaTonya Bonseigneur, a cousin who grew up with Thomas, told The Associated Press the family believes he died from a seizure.

"... Honored to have known you brutha. R.I.P!" Broncos Hall of Fame running back Terrell Davis posted on Twitter.

Thomas grew up in the tiny town of Montrose in southeast Georgia, where he rose to great heights after a troubled childhood that included his mother and grandmother being sent to prison for selling drugs. Thomas attended Georgia Tech, where he was a standout even

in a run-oriented offense.

The Broncos and the coach at the time, Josh McDaniels, picked Thomas at No. 22 in the 2010 draft. That was over Dez Bryant, who went No. 24 to Dallas. A pick later, Denver took quarterback Tim Tebow.

Tebow and Thomas later teamed up for one of the most memorable passes in Broncos lore. On the first play of overtime in an AFC wild-card playoff game, Thomas broke free over the middle, hauled in a Tebow pass and sprinted for an 80-yard touchdown to beat Pittsburgh.

On social media, Tebow wrote: "... I'll be remembering him for his kindness, his smile that would light up a room, and the love he had for those in his life."

Thomas also paired with Peyton Manning, the fruitful partnership starting in 2012 when he had 94 catches for 1,434 yards and 10 touchdowns. Thomas made

his first of five straight Pro Bowl selections.

In Manning's final year, the Broncos defeated Carolina 24-10 in the Super Bowl to cap the 2015 season. Thomas had only one catch for 8 yards as Denver relied mainly on its defense and running game to secure the title.

"D.T. was a better person than he was a player, and he was a Hall of Fame player. That tells you how good of a person he was," Manning posted on Twitter through the Broncos. "He treated my kids like they were his own. He was there for every teammate's charity event."

Then there's former Broncos tight end Jacob Tamme, who posted a video of his son conducting a mock interview as he put on a football helmet.

"First of all, can you introduce yourself to us?" he asked in the video.

"Demaryius Thomas," his son responded.



Bill "Supersandy" Riggen receives his trophy and prize money from Ye Olde Saipanne Golfe Clubbe commissioner Michael "26" Deary. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

'Supersandy' Riggen is Golfer of the Year



Bill "Supersandy" Riggen shot a net 68 at Kingfisher Golf Links last Dec. 4 to become the Ye Olde Saipanne Golfe Clubbe's 2021 Champion Golfer of the Year.

Riggen's 68 bested the second place finishers Timothy "Tex" Brasuell and Greg "Fossil" Koebel by a staggering nine strokes, leaving absolutely no doubt that the best man won this year's tournament.

The outcome was in doubt

only momentarily when, after finishing the front nine five shots clear of the field, Riggen double bogeyed both holes No. 10 and 11. However, any hope that his competitors could take in this brief lapse of form was slowly, steadily, and painfully quashed as Riggen completed the final seven holes in 1-over par. The championship effectively ended at the 17th, where three of his closest competitors came to grief with 4-over par 8s while Rig-

gen calmly produced a par.

After the championship round, the Ye Olde Saipanne Golfe Clubbe members repaired to Wild Bill's Bar and Grille for the presentation of the perpetual trophy, winner's jacket, and prize money to their new Champion Golfer of the Year. The consensus was that Riggen's spectacular round was attributable largely to the keeping of his prodigious drives on the fairway and out of the jungle, where he has spent much of

his golfing career. Also, as noted by the Clubbe's sage commissioner Michael "26" Deary, only once during the championship did Riggen produce one of the wretched chunks on an approach shot that so often plagues his game and horrifies his playing partners.

Rounding out the Top 5 in this year's tournament were Deary, who shot a 78 and last year's champion, Don "ChampChamp" Dunlop, with a 79. (PR)

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

| Atlantic Division | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|------|----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Brooklyn | 18 | 8 | .692 | — |
| Philadelphia | 15 | 12 | .556 | 3½ |
| Boston | 13 | 14 | .481 | 5½ |
| Toronto | 12 | 14 | .462 | 6 |
| New York | 12 | 14 | .462 | 6 |

| Southeast Division | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Miami | 16 | 11 | .593 | — |
| Washington | 15 | 12 | .556 | 1 |
| Charlotte | 15 | 13 | .536 | 1½ |
| Atlanta | 13 | 13 | .500 | 2½ |
| Orlando | 5 | 22 | .185 | 11 |

| Central Division | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Milwaukee | 17 | 10 | .630 | — |
| Chicago | 17 | 10 | .630 | — |
| Cleveland | 16 | 12 | .571 | 1½ |
| Indiana | 12 | 16 | .429 | 5½ |
| Detroit | 4 | 21 | .160 | 12 |

WESTERN CONFERENCE

| Southwest Division | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Memphis | 16 | 11 | .593 | — |
| Dallas | 12 | 13 | .480 | 3 |
| San Antonio | 9 | 16 | .360 | 6 |
| Houston | 8 | 18 | .308 | 7½ |
| New Orleans | 8 | 20 | .286 | 8½ |

| Northwest Division | | | | |
|--------------------|----|----|------|-----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Utah | 19 | 7 | .731 | — |
| Denver | 13 | 13 | .500 | 6 |
| Portland | 11 | 15 | .423 | 8 |
| Minnesota | 11 | 15 | .423 | 8 |
| Oklahoma City | 8 | 17 | .320 | 10½ |

| Pacific Division | | | | |
|------------------|----|----|------|----|
| | W | L | Pct | GB |
| Phoenix | 21 | 4 | .840 | — |
| Golden State | 21 | 5 | .808 | ½ |
| L.A. Clippers | 15 | 12 | .556 | 7 |
| L.A. Lakers | 14 | 13 | .519 | 8 |
| Sacramento | 11 | 16 | .407 | 11 |

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

| East | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| New England | 9 | 4 | 0 | .692 | 350 | 200 |
| Buffalo | 7 | 5 | 0 | .583 | 336 | 196 |
| Miami | 6 | 7 | 0 | .462 | 254 | 288 |
| N.Y. Jets | 3 | 9 | 0 | .250 | 217 | 367 |

| South | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|----|---|------|-----|-----|
| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Tennessee | 8 | 4 | 0 | .667 | 304 | 290 |
| Indianapolis | 7 | 6 | 0 | .538 | 371 | 283 |
| Houston | 2 | 10 | 0 | .167 | 164 | 323 |
| Jacksonville | 2 | 10 | 0 | .167 | 180 | 320 |

| North | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Baltimore | 8 | 4 | 0 | .667 | 282 | 260 |
| Cincinnati | 7 | 5 | 0 | .583 | 331 | 267 |
| Cleveland | 6 | 6 | 0 | .500 | 254 | 267 |
| Pittsburgh | 6 | 6 | 1 | .500 | 272 | 322 |

| West | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Kansas City | 8 | 4 | 0 | .667 | 303 | 259 |
| L.A. Chargers | 7 | 5 | 0 | .583 | 314 | 315 |
| Denver | 6 | 6 | 0 | .500 | 237 | 218 |
| Las Vegas | 6 | 6 | 0 | .500 | 274 | 312 |

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

| East | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Dallas | 8 | 4 | 0 | .667 | 353 | 267 |
| Washington | 6 | 6 | 0 | .500 | 246 | 297 |
| Philadelphia | 6 | 7 | 0 | .462 | 337 | 291 |
| N.Y. Giants | 4 | 8 | 0 | .333 | 211 | 273 |

| South | | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Tampa Bay | 9 | 3 | 0 | .750 | 377 | 270 |
| Atlanta | 5 | 7 | 0 | .417 | 216 | 332 |
| Carolina | 5 | 7 | 0 | .417 | 236 | 253 |
| New Orleans | 5 | 7 | 0 | .417 | 274 | 276 |

| North | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|----|---|------|-----|-----|
| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Green Bay | 9 | 3 | 0 | .750 | 283 | 242 |
| Minnesota | 6 | 7 | 0 | .462 | 344 | 333 |
| Chicago | 4 | 8 | 0 | .333 | 201 | 287 |
| Detroit | 1 | 10 | 1 | .125 | 203 | 316 |

| West | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|---|---|------|-----|-----|
| | W | L | T | Pct | PF | PA |
| Arizona | 10 | 2 | 0 | .833 | 343 | 224 |
| L.A. Rams | 8 | 4 | 0 | .667 | 336 | 270 |
| San Francisco | 6 | 6 | 0 | .500 | 303 | 278 |
| Seattle | 4 | 8 | 0 | .333 | 239 | 249 |

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HIRO

From Page 20

relay team. Prior to that the CNMI never participated in a single gender relay at the Junior Pan Pacific. It was a historic first step for CNMI swimming. In addition, two CNMI records were broken with Rezne Wong advancing to the A Final, also a first for the Commonwealth.

Next came the 2009 FINA World Championships in Rome, Italy where he coached the team to 12 CNMI records. It also marked the men's male relay team's debut in World Championships.

In the 2010 Micronesian Games in Palau, Kimura coached the men's team to a sweep of all gold medals. It was the first time in the history of the Micro Games that one country, regardless of gender, won all the gold. The 2010 Micro Games also saw the

CNMI swimmers break nine national records.

Kimura coached Team CNMI in the FINA World Cup in 2011 in his home country of Japan. In the Tokyo meet, CNMI swimmer Kai Staal broke the 24-second barrier in the 50m freestyle.

Prior to this year's FINA World Championships in Abu Dhabi, Kimura's last stint as head coach of the national team was in 2014 in the 2014 Oceania Championships in Auckland, New Zealand. It was a memorable time for Kimura as his son, Kensuke, became the first CNMI medalist (bronze) at the Oceania Championships. It also saw swimmers from the CNMI break three national records.

Asked what makes him continue coaching long before his sons graduated from Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center, where he and his wife, Yuko, coach, Kimura had this an-

swer: "For some adults, they want to spend their private time playing golf, riding a bike, or drinking beer, etc. For me, my relax time is to stay with young swimmers at the pool. It is my style to spending my private time. I love teaching kids how to swim that's all!"

Kimura added that aside from teaching swimming, he also has a wide network of swimming coaches around the world.

"I have huge connection with coaches in the world. I'm Japanese, but not only communicate with Japanese coaches, but also with coaches from the U.S., Australia, Singapore, Taiwan, and so on. But I do create our training program and workouts by myself. They are my original workouts," he said.

Kimura also thanked Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation, especially its president Colin Thompson and vice president John Hirsh for

facilitating the national team's stint to the 2021 FINA World Swimming Championships.

"There are so many paperwork involved and it was really troublesome because of COVID-19. All the preparations up to the departure were done quickly and accurately by the federation. Thanks to them I was able to focus in training our swimmers until the day of departure. Federation members Richard Sikkell and Hiroko Tenorio will also be going to Abu Dhabi with us as team leader and team manager. They also helped with the paperwork and setting up our itinerary."

The national swimming coach also extended his gratitude to everyone who helped the national team prepare for the swimming championships.

"The national team kept training by using a private pool. We really appreciate the owner and the family for

letting us use their private space in spite of current hard situation. Thanks also to Aqua Resort Club, Island Apparel, Saipan Apparel, 500 Sails, Saipan Swim Club, and SSC coach Richard Sikkell. One of the parents of Tsunami Saipan also donated 100 pieces KF94 mask which is said to be the best mask in the world."

Last but not the least, Kimura also have kudos to his wife.

"To Tsunami Saipan team manager and all our swimmers' mom and my wife Yuko Kimura, thank you so much for supporting us in this trip. I never feel worried for my club, Tsunami Saipan, when we go off-island because she will always be there to handle the team in my absence. Captain (Tenorio), vice-captain (Suzuki), and also girls leaders (Litulumars) will also be absent, so it's very difficult. We will try our best and send Yuko good news from Abu Dhabi."

JKPL

From Page 20

Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. said it was unfortunate that JKPL had to cancel the 5K Literacy Fun Run/Walk. He, however, assured Naputi and JKPL that his organization will be ready to help them again when they do hold the event.

"I think it's great the library made the choice to take precautions against the rise of cases. Whenever they decided to hold it we will be ready to assist them," he said.

The JKPL 5K Literacy Fun Run/Walk was intended to start from the library in Su-supe with the turnaround at the Quartermaster Road before returning to the finish at the library.

This event was free and open to the community and free T-shirts were set to be distributed on the day of the event for the first 75 registered participants (Sizes limited on a first-come, first-registered basis).

Photo/video release and liability forms must be completed during event-day registration. Bottled water will be provided for participants. Temperature checks and hand sanitizer stations will be available. Upon

completing the run/walk, participants will receive a library eco-bag, free books new and used, and bragging rights in completing the event.

Community sponsors and donors were encouraged to donate to the JKPL to help fund our public libraries' programs and services. The JKPL is accepting educational tax credit donations, in-kind support, and sponsorship for the 30th anniversary programs and services. JKPL also welcomes and encourages businesses and private donors to consider donating cash contributions. Pursuant to NMI Public Law 15-120, the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library is able to receive cash contributions under ETC; make checks payable to: CNMI Treasury.

Visit the JKPL website www.cnmilib.org and follow us on Facebook and Instagram @joetenkiyupubliclibrary for the latest news and updates. Please call JKPL at (670) 235-7322/7323 (READ) should you have any questions. The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's regular hours of operation are as follows: Tuesday through Thursday from 10am to 6am, Friday from 1:30pm to 7pm, and Saturday from 9:30am to 4pm. Closed Sunday, Monday, and holidays.



Championship flight runner-up Sun Ho Kang and third place Feng Chun Jin pose with McDonald's Guam and Saipan owners Jose "Joe" and Marcia Ayuyu during the awards banquet of the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament last Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort. At left is tournament director Vicente "Ben" Babauta.

MARK RABAGO

J.J. ATALIG

From Page 20

issues of *Saipan Tribune*.

Established in 1987, the Ronald McDonald House

Charities has helped over 38,000 families from the CNMI, Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, and Hawaii. It's not directly

affiliated with McDonald's Corp. or any of its restaurants and relies heavily on the support of the community to continue delivering services for those in need.



'Supersandy' Rikken is Golfer of the Year

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Robinson scores season-high 26 points, Heat beat Bulls

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20 MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2021

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

J.J. Atalig rules championship flight

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Veteran golfer J.J. Atalig once again showed he's one of the best golfers in the CNMI after topping the championship flight of the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament last Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

The Division of Customs colonel shot a 1-over 73 to rule the marquee division of the event following a 37 in the front and a 36 in the back nine.

"It's great that I am able to play in the McDonald's tournament and winning, es-



pecially winning their inaugural Tournament means a lot to me. The best hole for me today was hole No. 1 after I hit tee shot down the middle, then hitting my second shot to 3 feet and then a tap-in birdie. This set the pace for me play-

ing a tough condition today with a lot of wind. Closing with two birdies on the back nine sealed the win for me today," he said.

Atalig also thanked everyone who supported him in his passion for golf and added that his win in the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament will come a long way in improving his game and increasing his confidence as part of the CNMI National Golf Team for next year's Pacific Mini Games.

"I'm working hard for it," he said.

Coming in second to Atalig in the championship flight was Sun Ho Kang, who finished with a 3-over 75 built around a 37 in the first nine holes and a 38 in the last nine. Feng Chun Jin came third with a 4-over 76 after shooting a 39 in the front and a 37 in the back.

The win in the championship flight was worth \$500



for Atalig, while Kang and Jin settled for the second place \$300 and third place \$200 purses, respectively.

In the A flight, Victor Salas won the category with a 7-over 79. He shot a 39-40 in the front and back nines to take home the \$500 top prize. Homerun hitter-turned-golfer Ned Norita came in second with his 81(39-42) followed by John Reyes with his 82 (39-43). Second place was worth \$300 for the former and third place \$200 for the latter.

Results of the B flight, C flight, women's flight, senior flight, and super senior flight will be published in the next

See J.J. ATALIG on Page 19

J.J. Atalig, seen here in a file photo, won the championship flight of the inaugural Ronald McDonald House of Charities Golf Tournament last Saturday at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Shuji Kuroda flexes as he runs with, from left, Kensuke Sato, Marshall Hoskins, and Michiteru Mita during a recent Run Saipan event.

MARK RABAGO

JKPL 5K Literacy Run/Walk postponed to spring '22

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's 5K Literacy Fun

Run/Walk originally set for this coming Saturday, Dec. 18, has been postponed to a later date due to the rising cases of COVID-19 in the community.

"Because of the closure of non-essential government offices for the next 14 days which would take place from Dec. 6 to 19, 2021, the Joeten-Kiyu Pub-

lic Library facility will be closed during such time in order to safeguard the health and safety for our patrons during this pandemic. JKPL's 5K Literacy Run/Walk, which was scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021, will be postponed until spring of 2022," said JKPL director Erlinda Naputi.

Sponsored by JKPL as well as Run Saipan and the Friends of the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, the 5K Literacy Fun Run/Walk was supposed to be part of JKPL's 30th anniversary celebration.

See JKPL on Page 19

Hiro glad to return as national coach



CNMI National Swimming Team Hiroaki Kimura, center, poses with national swimmers Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio, and sisters Asaka and Shoko Litulumar days prior to leaving for the 2021 FINA World Swimming Championships set from Dec. 16 to 21 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



For Hiroyuki Kimura, the 2021 FINA World Swimming Championships set from Dec. 16 to 21 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates marks his return to head coaching duties for the CNMI National Swimming Team.

"Since 2014, I didn't have any experience in the CNMI national team as head coach any more. The 2021 FINA World Swimming Championships is my return as head coach after eight years," he said before leaving with Northern Marianas Swimming Federation representative Richard Sikkil and national swimmers Jinnosuke Suzuki, Juhn Tenorio, and sisters Asaka and Shoko Litulumar for the UAE yesterday.

Before 2014, Kimura had five separate stints as head coach for the CNMI national swimming team.

He made his debut in the 2009 Junior Pan Pacific Swimming Championships in Guam as coach of the men's

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